

The AdvantAGE Programme in Wales.

A summary of key themes and learning points from befriending projects.

Research paper



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The AdvantAGE Programme

In 2012, the Big Lottery Fund in Wales (The Fund) announced it was investing some £20 million in 30 projects operating across Wales via the AdvantAGE programme. The AdvantAGE programme aims to improve the lives of older people by providing access to befriending or advocacy services. The programme recognises, and seeks to address the fact that older age brings challenges which, without support, can be daunting and lead to social isolation – which means loneliness or lack of contact with other people.

The programme, via its suite of projects is targeting people over the age of 50 living in Wales. The outcomes that the Fund wants to achieve through the AdvantAGE programme include:

- Reduced loneliness and increased wellbeing through improved social interaction.
- Increased confidence and ability to meet the challenges and opportunities of ageing.
- Increased understanding and use of rights and awareness and uptake of services leading to greater independence and choice for older people.

In addition, all projects funded by AdvantAGE are expected to achieve a fourth outcome which is that:

- Results of evaluation must demonstrate the impact and promote the development of advocacy and befriending services.

1.2 The Befriending projects

20 of the 29 projects funded via AdvantAGE are befriending projects¹ and the organisations running these projects felt that there would be value in undertaking a combined 'meta' analysis of their individual evaluation findings. This was based on a perception that there was a lack of evaluative evidence as to the effectiveness of befriending interventions in terms of tackling loneliness and social isolation.

The aim of this report is therefore to make an informed, positive, evidence based contribution to the key debates and on-going policy discussions relating to loneliness and social isolation of older people in Wales and how befriending interventions can help address these issues. In doing so, it is hoped that the report contributes to the fourth objective of the AdvantAGE programme (i.e. to demonstrate impact and promote the development of befriending services).

The report firstly provides a brief overview of older people in Wales (Chapter 2) before looking at definitional issues around loneliness, social isolation and befriending (Chapter 3). It then outlines the current policy and strategic context relevant to befriending for older people in Wales (Chapter 4) before considering monitoring data and evaluation evidence produced by AdvantAGE befriending projects to date (Chapter 5). Finally, the report sets out some concluding remarks (Chapter 6).

BIG, as a committed outcomes-based funder, encourages its grant holders to adopt the Results Based Accountability (RBA) methodology in assessing the impact of its funding. Section 3 of this report is therefore structured around the key principles of RBA which are to ask the questions:

- How much has been done?

¹ The other nine being advocacy projects.

- How well has it been done?
- What difference has been made?

1.3 The purpose of this paper

In response to a lack of evaluative evidence about befriending services for older people, the AdvantAGE grant holders identified the need to bring together monitoring information and evaluation evidence from their respective projects in a collective and strategic way to help inform policy and practice.

This is the fourth and final iteration of this paper, the first of which was completed in July 2014. While the earlier iterations of this paper have not been formally published, they have been proactively used by AdvantAGE grant holders to disseminate evaluation findings concerning befriending activities and to inform wider policy debates. Activity in this regard has included:

- Attending a cross-party group meeting at the National Assembly for Wales on ageing. A group of befriending projects made a presentation to the group focused on the findings of the meta-evaluation exercise. As a result, the group's chairperson (Mike Hedges AM) raised a statement of opinion on loneliness and isolation and the need for befriending services which was subsequently signed by 20 AMs. Mike Hedges also elected to base a 30 minute assembly debate on a topic of his choice on loneliness, isolation and befriending which was heard in a plenary session on 5th March 2015. The statement quoted extensively from an earlier iteration of this paper².
- Presenting the key findings from an earlier iteration of this paper to the Older People's Commissioner for Wales on 23rd October 2014.

The aim of this final iteration is to take a more summative approach to answering the following research questions:

- How much have AdvantAGE befriending projects achieved?
- How well have they delivered their services?
- What difference have they made?

The remainder of this paper provides:

- An updated socio-demographic overview of older people in Wales.
- Definitions of the practice of befriending.
- An updated overview of key policy drivers and research evidence in relation to older people in Wales.
- An overview of lessons learned based on a meta-analysis of monitoring information and evaluation evidence gathered by individual projects.
- Conclusions from the work undertaken.

The main body of the paper is supported by a series of technical annexes which contain more detailed monitoring information and evaluation evidence supplied by the individual projects.

1.4 Methodology

This work is based on a meta-analysis of monitoring data and self-evaluation evidence gathered by individual AdvantAGE befriending projects. No primary research has been undertaken in formulating this paper. The work has thus involved:

² See: <http://www.mikehedges.org.uk/short-debate-on-lonliness-and-befriending-services-4-march-2015/>

- Reviewing a number of relevant policy, strategy and research documents (referred to in chapters 3 and 4).
- Receiving, collating and analysing information, data and evidence provided by 17 of the 20 AdvantAGE befriending projects.

The report has been prepared by Old Bell 3 Ltd. an independent social research and evaluation consultancy as part of a self-evaluation support service to Big Lottery Funded projects in Wales.

2 OLDER PEOPLE IN WALES

2.1 Brief Socio-Demographic Overview

Welsh Government Statistics Wales data³ shows that there are **600,630** people of 65 years and over living in Wales which represents **19.4 per cent** of the population.

Earlier iterations of this paper analysed Public Health Observatory Wales (PHOW) data (2010) which estimated that there were 558,100 people of 65 years and over living in Wales (or 18.6 per cent of the population). This confirms the trend of an ageing population in Wales. Indeed research by Age Cymru states that Wales has a population with the highest proportion of older people in the UK⁴.

The table below shows the percentage population aged over 65 within each of Wales' 22 local authority areas based on the 2013 Stats Wales data.

Figure 1: Population estimates* and percentage of population aged 65 and over, local authorities, all ages and persons aged 65 and over, 2013

	All ages	Over 65s	% over 65s
Isle of Anglesey	70,091	16,579	23.6
Gwynedd	121,911	26,672	21.8
Conwy	115,835	29,757	25.6
Denbighshire	94,510	21,189	22.4
Flintshire	153,240	29,341	19.1
Wrexham	136,399	24,824	18.1
Powys	132,705	32,718	24.6
Ceredigion	75,964	16,726	22
Pembrokeshire	123,261	28,750	23.3
Carmarthenshire	184,681	40,572	21.9
Swansea	240,332	45,361	18.8
Neath Port Talbot	139,898	27,544	19.6
Bridgend	140,480	26,606	18.9
The Vale of Glamorgan	127,159	24,967	19.6
Cardiff	351,710	47,826	13.5
Rhondda Cynon Taf	236,114	42,842	18.1

³ See: <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Equality/Population-Estimates-by-Age-Year>

⁴ Older people in Wales: facts and statistics. March 2014. Age Cymru. Page 3.

Merthyr Tydfil	59,021	10,332	17.5
Caerphilly	179,247	31,831	17.7
Blaenau Gwent	69,789	13,086	18.7
Torfaen	91,407	17,355	18.9
Monmouthshire	92,100	20,675	22.4
Newport	146,558	25,077	17.1
Wales	3,082,412	600,630	19.4

Source: Welsh Government Stats Wales.

**Produced using population estimates by the Office for National Statistics, based on 2011 Census data.*

Work published by Age Cymru in March 2014 also found that:

- In Wales, there were 25,000 residents aged 90 and over in 2011, compared with 19,000 in 2001⁵.
- The number of people aged 65 and over in Wales is projected to increase by 292,000 or 50 per cent between 2012 and 2037⁶.
- In Wales, the median age of the population is projected to increase from 41.7 years in 2012 to 43.9 years by 2037⁷.
- In terms of life expectancy, Monmouthshire has the highest life expectancy at birth for males (80.1 years) and Ceredigion has the highest life expectancy at birth for females (83.9 years). Blaenau Gwent has the lowest life expectancy in Wales for both males and females (75.7 years and 79.9 years respectively)⁸.
- Overall, 15.4 per cent of the Welsh population over 60 can speak Welsh.⁹
- One in three people in Wales aged 65 and over lives on their own. For people aged over 85 it is nearly one in two. 43 per cent of people aged 75 and over live alone in Wales.

In relation to general health and well-being, various sources of research have reported that:

- 85 per cent of people responding to an Age Cymru poll said that they have concerns about their health in relation to ageing¹⁰.
- 40 per cent of people aged 65 and over in Wales say their health is fair or poor¹¹.
- Current estimates are that approximately 43,000 people in Wales are experiencing dementia¹². The Alzheimer's Society estimated the number to be closer to 45,000 in 2012. The Welsh Government estimates that by 2021, the number of people with dementia across Wales is projected to increase by 31% and by as much as 44% in some rural areas¹³. Dementia is more common as people age, with one in 14 people

⁵ Ibid. Page 3.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. Page 6.

⁹ Source: 2011 Census Data. Stats Wales.

¹⁰ Ibid. Page 11. This finding was based on an ICM poll for Age Cymru conducted in March 2012.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Older people in Wales: facts and statistics. March 2014. Age Cymru.

¹³ Source: National Dementia Vision for Wales. Alzheimer's Society and Welsh Government.

over 65, one in six people over 80 and one in three people over 95 thought to have some form of dementia¹⁴.

- There is evidence to suggest that only around 37 per cent of those suffering from dementia in Wales have received a formal diagnosis¹⁵. This compares with an estimated 46 per cent of people with dementia in the UK having a formal diagnosis¹⁶.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Sources: National Dementia Vision for Wales. Alzheimer's Society and Welsh Government and <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/dementia-sufferers-wales-forced-care-2494527>

¹⁶ Older people in Wales: facts and statistics. March 2014. Age Cymru. Page 11. Based on Alzheimer's Society and Alzheimer Scotland (2012) Mapping the Dementia Gap 2011: Progress on improving diagnosis of dementia 2010 - 2011, Tesco.

3 LONLIENESS, SOCIAL ISOLATION AND BEFRIENDING

3.1 What do social isolation and loneliness mean?

Age UK in a published paper entitled 'Loneliness and Isolation: Evidence Review'¹⁷ found that while the terms 'loneliness' and 'isolation' are 'sometimes used as if they were synonymous' in practice, they are two different concepts. As such, Age UK offer the following definition:

'Isolation refers to separation from social or familial contact, community involvement or access to services. Loneliness by contrast can be understood as an individual's personal, subjective sense of lacking these things to the extent that they are wanted or needed'¹⁸.

Age UK believe that it is therefore possible to be 'isolated without being lonely and to be lonely without being isolated'. They also found that loneliness and social isolation amongst older people are 'relatively under-researched' themes and while there has been 'considerable attention on providing a sound research base for prevention', this has 'largely focused on tangible benefits and cost savings on the broad topic of health' and has 'not shed much light yet on the relatively complex set of benefits which could come from alleviating loneliness in older people'¹⁹.

In Wales, a recent report by the Bevan Foundation for Age Alliance Wales²⁰ found that loneliness and isolation have a very damaging effect on mental health and the quality of older people's lives.

Research by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) during the late 1990s made the clear link between older people living in isolation and the emergence of befriending.

'Community care policies have led to unprecedented numbers of potentially vulnerable people living independently across the UK. One commonly reported problem for these people is a sense of isolation. This isolation may be related to practical difficulties such as a lack of transport, fear of crime, or language and cultural barriers. People who have lived in institutions may never have had the opportunity to develop local social connections or the skills for maintaining relationships, while for some older people bereavement may contribute to social isolation. Befriending is one way to address the isolation felt by people in all of these groups'²¹.

3.2 Defining the practice of befriending

JRF offer the following definition of befriending:

'A relationship between two or more individuals which is initiated, supported, and monitored by an agency that has defined one or more parties as likely to benefit. Ideally the relationship is non-judgemental, mutual, purposeful, and there is a commitment over time'²².

In its research, JRF found that most befriending schemes rely on volunteers to help deliver the service 'because they are a cheaper means to service provision, and because they are felt to have skills and attributes which a paid befriender could not bring to the role. Most

¹⁷ Loneliness and Isolation: Evidence Review. Age UK. Undated.

¹⁸ Ibid. Page 7.

¹⁹ Ibid. Page 7.

²⁰ Wales: A Good Place to Grow Old?

²¹ The Role and Impact of Befriending. October 1998. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Summary Report.

²² Ibid.

important to users is that the befriender chooses to spend time with them, rather than being under professional or family obligations to do so²³.

The JRF's research also emphasised the importance of the befriending relationship and the significance of 'matching' volunteers and users on issues such as 'shared leisure interests, a similar personality and age'²⁴. The research also recognised however that 'matching is tempered by the realities of people who are available and practical factors such as location or the times that a volunteer is available'.

The JRF research concluded that while befriending is not a mechanism for 'tackling the root cause of disadvantage', it can 'ameliorate the worst aspects of isolation and exclusion from community participation' and can 'make a valued and valuable contribution to people's lives'²⁵.

AGE UK has found in its research that 'there is a distinct lack of evidence relating to the effectiveness of services aimed at reducing loneliness and social isolation among older people' but that 'there is a need to focus on befriending services for older people, in particular the effectiveness of such services in terms of their impact on older people's quality of life and their overall preventative value'²⁶. The AGE UK report also found that evaluation evidence of what works in terms of befriending interventions is quite limited, concluding that 'the evaluation of most schemes is limited to a handful of case studies'²⁷ and that 'all that is currently available by way of assessment is either a short collection of positive quotes from service users or a log of activities undertaken'²⁸.

Interestingly, AGE UK in their review of evidence also conclude that 'there is a need for research that makes a distinction between different types of low-level befriending as opposed to research that simply regards all befriending services as one and the same'.

Indeed, AGE UK (in its evidence paper) seems to expand the definition of befriending into a number of sub-categories or different types of service provision. For instance, the report refers to examples of:

- *Low-level befriending* e.g. support provided via the telephone.
- *Bereavement befriending* designed to provide practical assistance and emotional support to older people following bereavement (this sometimes includes counselling).
- *Intermediate care befriending* which provides support to older people for example when they leave hospital.
- *End of Life befriending* for older people who have life-threatening terminal illnesses.
- *E-befriending* schemes, delivered via e-mail or social media (e.g. the National Autistic Society operate an e-befriending service)²⁹.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Loneliness and Isolation: Evidence Review. Age UK. Undated. Page 18.

²⁷ Ibid. Page 19.

²⁸ Ibid. Page 25.

²⁹ Ibid. Page 21.

4 POLICY AND EVIDENCE BASE

In this section, we review some of the key policy, strategy and research documents of relevance to AdvantAGE befriending projects.

4.1 The Strategy for Older People in Wales 2013-2023

Published in May 2013, the Strategy for Older People in Wales (2013-2023) sets out a vision that 'people in Wales feel valued and supported whatever their age' and that 'all older people in Wales have the social, environmental and financial resources they need to deal with the opportunities and challenges they face'³⁰.

Referred to as the 'third phase' of the strategy for older people in Wales, this document sets out the challenges for Welsh Government for the next 10 years as being to:

- 'Create a Wales where full participation is within the reach of all older people and their contribution is recognised and valued.
- Develop communities that are age-friendly while ensuring older people have the resources they need to live.
- Ensure that future generations of older people are well equipped for later life by encouraging recognition of the changes and demands that may be faced and taking action early in preparation'³¹.

4.2 Older People's Commissioner – Framework for Action (2013-2017)

In May 2013, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales published a Framework for Action which sets out her priorities for the next four years as well as key changes and improvements needed in Wales in the context of older people.

The Framework sets out a 'quality of life model' which is underpinned by a set of values that are important to older people, namely that they:

- Feel safe and are listened to, valued and respected.
- Are able to get the help they need, when they need it, in the way they want it.
- Live in a place which suits them and their lives.
- Are able to do the things that matter to them.

The framework also states that 'Older people are also very clear that they want to have a strong voice and meaningful control over their lives, particularly in how they are supported and cared for. The extent to which they do has a direct impact on their quality of life and, in many cases, both increases the impact of services and reduces the cost of those services to the public purse'.

This emphasis on older people having choice and control over their lives and the implications of this in terms of the responsiveness and fitness for purpose of public services is highly relevant in the context of AdvantAGE projects.

³⁰ The Strategy for Older People in Wales 2013-2023. Page ii.

³¹ Ibid. Page 1.

Figure 6: The Quality of Life Model



Source: Older People's Commissioner for Wales. Framework For Action. Page 2.

4.3 Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

There are no reference to loneliness, social isolation or befriending in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 nor were there in the preceding Bill of March 2012. The lack of reference to loneliness and isolation within the Act and the preceding Bill is perhaps somewhat surprising given the recognition that these issues exist amongst the older population in Wales (see 4.4 below for instance). However, the lack of any reference to befriending would seem to underline the fact that it is not yet regraded as a 'mainstream' practice by policy-makers.

4.4 A Report about the Approaches to Tackling Social Isolation within Welsh Local Authorities

In 2013, the Welsh Government's Social Research division published a report entitled 'Let's Start Assessing Not Assuming'³². While it needs to be stressed that this is not a policy document, it is arguably the most informative and comprehensive assessment of social isolation and appropriate interventions to tackle the problem in Wales.

The report states that

'Social isolation is a risk to independent living because it has been associated

³² Let's Start Assessing Not Assuming. A Report about the Approaches to Tackling Social Isolation within Welsh Local Authorities. Welsh Government. 2013.

with higher rates of morbidity and mortality, posing a similar risk to health as other common factors such as smoking or heart disease. As the older population grows, therefore, social isolation among older adults is gathering increasing attention'³³.

It also recognises that:

‘Although there is a wide-ranging academic literature in this area, in policy and practice social isolation has not yet received detailed attention. This means definitions, initiatives, and evaluations are all currently under-developed and there is a gap in knowledge about evidence-based best practice’³⁴.

In terms of defining social isolation, the report finds that ‘while clear definitions exist in the academic literature, they do not seem to have been successfully transferred to policy or practice contexts. There is a general understanding of situations that can lead to social isolation – such as living alone, bereavement, poor access to local transport and facilities, for example. However, social isolation is often addressed in a general way, with no specific monitoring of whether it is actually being reduced. This means it often seems to be interchangeable with concepts of social exclusion or loneliness’³⁵.

The report goes on to analyse literature relating to the effectiveness of initiatives to reduce social isolation and draws out a number of consistent characteristics in terms of ‘what works’. These include findings from a 2005 meta-analysis by Cattani et al which identified that that successful interventions:

- Are targeted at specific groups, for example women, carers or people with a health need.
- Consult participants before the intervention is set up, with participants being involved in some way in the running of the intervention itself.
- Tend to be developed within or are run by an existing service³⁶.

A consistent finding from the desk based analysis in this report is the need for ‘more and better quality evaluations to be carried out’³⁷ and the aspiration that since the Big Lottery AdvantAGE programme specifically asks those applying for its funding to demonstrate how they will evaluate the success of their initiatives; this may contribute to an increased focus on issues of evaluation in this area’³⁸.

The report also drew attention to the ‘Campaign to End Loneliness’ in England which was launched in 2011 with the aim of raising awareness about issues surrounding loneliness in older age and attempting to address them. Research summaries prepared by the campaign outlined that ‘even where an initiative is not effective with regard to social isolation, it may well still have another kind of value to the people involved. This should be recognised, but not at the expense of robustly evaluating outcomes’³⁹.

In terms of evaluative approaches to interventions aimed at tackling social isolation amongst older people, the Welsh Government report draws attention to ‘concerns about evaluations which rely solely on user feedback’ with evidence to suggest that ‘older people often feel unable to criticise a service that they depend on’. It also drew attention to evidence

³³ Ibid. Page 8.

³⁴ Ibid. Page 8.

³⁵ Ibid. Page 13.

³⁶ Ibid. Page 15.

³⁷ Ibid. Page 16.

³⁸ Ibid. Page 39.

³⁹ Ibid. Page 16.

suggesting that 'older people were more likely than other groups to respond [to evaluation interviews] in a way that they think the interviewer wants to hear, rather than answering truthfully'⁴⁰.

The report set out a series of recommendations which include that:

- There needs to be a more consistent approach to evaluation of local authority (and other) activities aimed at tackling social isolation, supported by guidance from Welsh Government.
- Initiatives targeting social isolation need to be clear about which aspects they are tackling and how they will go about this.
- The design of new initiatives to tackle social isolation, or indeed policies or initiatives that are relevant to the issue of social isolation, should consider or embody the principal characteristics associated with effectiveness.
- Recognition of the complexity of the problem of social isolation is important – policies and initiatives which aim to address social isolation should be realistic about the sorts of impact they can achieve and how much the end state will differ from the baseline.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Page 17.

5 LESSONS LEARNED

5.1 The AdvantAGE befriending projects – An overview

The overall investment by BIG in the 20 befriending projects amounts to some £13.3 million which represents approximately 65% of the overall AdvantAGE programme budget. The average befriending project budget is £666,900. The projects are a mix of three and five year initiatives with the programme having launched in 2012.

Some projects provide one to one befriending while others are more focused on facilitating or developing group based activities in the community. A number of projects provide a 'mixed' service including one to one and group based befriending activities.

All projects target 50+ people, though beneath this some operate in individual local authority areas, some operate across a combination of local authority areas and some operate on an all-Wales basis.

In terms of staff and volunteer resources, it is possible to say that between them, the 17 befriending projects have:

- **29 full time staff** members
- **35 part time staff** members
- 8 staff members not classified as either full or part-time
- **1,378 volunteers.**

Technical annex 1 provides a more detailed overview of each of the befriending projects.

5.2 Intended Outcomes

Next, we provide a summary of the intended outcomes of the 17 befriending projects.

The information provided by the 17 projects on their intended outcomes shows that (in-line with the stated outcomes for the AdvantAGE programme) there has been a clear emphasis on:

- Tackling loneliness and isolation
- Improving self-confidence

Between them, the 17 projects are aiming to work with a combined total of **11,610 older people**. To put this into context, it represents two percent of the population aged 65 or over in Wales⁴¹; although it should be remembered that AdvantAGE projects are working with people aged 50 plus.

Annex 2 provides more detailed information on each project's outcomes.

⁴¹ Source: ONS estimates the population of people over 65 years of age in Wales to be 600,630 (2013).

5.3 Monitoring Information and Evaluation Evidence

Annex 3 provides a more detailed overview of the monitoring information and evaluation evidence each AdvantAGE befriending project supplied for meta-analysis.

During the course of Old Bell 3's work to support AdvantAGE grant holders (both befriending and advocacy) over the past two years, it became apparent that projects have gone about monitoring and evaluating their work in different ways. Some have commissioned independent external evaluators, while others have self-evaluated. Methodologies used to collate and analyse monitoring information have also varied.

Naturally, these different approaches have made the process of meta-analysis more challenging and these limitations need to be borne in mind in analysing the findings set out in this paper.

A key learning point to emerge from the experience of supporting projects in this more collective way is that there may be an opportunity for the Fund to 'design in' more specific and consistent approaches to project level monitoring and evaluation requirements of future programmes of this nature. Applicants could then be supported with advice and guidance (without being overly prescriptive) as part of the application process which would strengthen their ability to collaborate in analysing evaluation evidence and bring greater influence to bear via joint dissemination activities.

5.4 Performance - How much has been done?

The 17 projects that have provided monitoring data and evaluation evidence appear to be discharging activity wholly in-line with the intended aims and outcomes of the AdvantAGE befriending programme.

As of May 2015, a combined total of **8,382 beneficiaries** have been either referred to or engaged by the 17 projects that have provided us with beneficiary data. This represents 72 percent of the combined 11,610 target for these same projects. The average unit cost per beneficiary supported on the basis of the original £13.3m budget (across all 20 projects) is £1,587.

A combined total of **1,378 volunteers** have been recruited by the 17 projects that have provided data.

While projects have achieved a great deal in terms of the overall number of volunteers recruited, the evaluation evidence suggests that this has been a challenging area for several grant-holders. **Recruiting sufficient numbers of volunteers with appropriate skills and retaining these within projects over a sustained period has been difficult.** There are some emerging lessons from this in terms of having a clear plan and approach in place to targeting specific groups of people who make good volunteers. The importance of very 'localised' volunteer recruitment also appears to be a key theme. Where there have been shortages in volunteer capacity, there is some evidence that projects have reverted to employing staff to deliver services. The experience of many of the AdvantAGE advocacy projects has been very similar in relation to volunteer recruitment, deployment and retention.

Most of the befriending projects are supporting **a greater proportion of women beneficiaries**. Only two projects provided data that showed they are working with a greater proportion of men than women (BAVO and Age Cymru Gwynedd a Mon). The weighting

towards women beneficiaries reflects a similar take-up pattern in the AdvantAGE advocacy projects.

Projects providing beneficiary data are targeting people that are aged 50+. In all, 14 projects provided a breakdown of beneficiary data on age. For six of these 14 projects, the largest proportion of beneficiaries they work with fell into the 50-79 age category. For eight of these 14 projects, the largest proportion of beneficiaries they work with fell into the 80+ age category.

The data available on inward beneficiary referral sources is somewhat mixed. Seven projects provided data on inward referral sources and for four of these the largest proportion of beneficiaries were referred via local authority social services. For the other three, the largest proportion of referrals came from care homes for one, from community organisations for the second and from self-referrals for the third.

5.5 Performance - How well has it been done?

Information and evidence supplied by the 17 befriending projects about how well their projects are being received shows that:

- Satisfaction levels from both beneficiaries (supported by projects) and volunteers (helping with project delivery) are generally very high and feedback on the quality of services being delivered is positive.
- Befriending activities provided by AdvantAGE projects are meeting and in some cases exceeding the needs and expectations of supported beneficiaries.
- There is some evidence to suggest that sustaining on-going interest in group befriending activities can be challenging. A learning point seems to be that where a befriending group has a common theme or a thematic focus, the interest of members is more easily retained over a longer period.
- The information available on 'how well' things have been done is somewhat inconsistent and the basis of the information provided is not always clear. In several cases, the base (i.e. number) of beneficiaries interviewed to gather feedback is not always stated. A learning point in this regard is that wherever possible, projects should state the number of beneficiaries that have participated in evaluation activity.
- The perceived success and sustainability of befriending groups is dependent on the appropriateness of the settings in which they occur and the numbers involved.
- Volunteers are well informed, are well supported and have a clear understanding of their role within projects. There is some evidence however that beneficiaries are slightly less clear about the role of befrienders.
- Volunteers themselves are enjoying their involvement with projects and many would recommend the activity to others.

- Evidence to date suggests that there has been a high degree of success in 'matching' befrienders and beneficiaries in the context of one-to-one relationships. A key learning point here is the need to invest time up-front in the matching process and where possible for the participants to live in fairly close proximity and to have common interests.

5.6 Effect - What difference has been made?

Information and evidence provided by the 17 befriending projects in relation to what difference they are making shows that:

5.6.1 Beneficiary Perspective

The evidence shows that befriending projects are making a positive difference to reducing loneliness and social isolation. They are also making a positive difference in terms of improving levels of social and community interaction amongst supported beneficiaries. For supported individuals, the evidence shows:

- Improved confidence levels
- Increased involvement in and engagement with 'the community'
- Making new friends
- Having stronger support networks in place
- An up-lift in mood and general outlook
- Improvements in health and well-being - physical, mental and emotional
- A sense of increased safety and security
- A reduction in the sense of loss of independence

Overall, the evidence suggests that beneficiaries of one to one befriending have experienced slightly stronger positive outcomes than those participating in group based befriending activities.

There is some (albeit very limited) evidence to suggest that where there are time limits on the length of a one to one befriending relationship – this can prove challenging to manage – particularly in terms of avoiding over-dependence on the interventions offered by befriending projects. This is something that could usefully be explored further in the final stages of project delivery.

5.6.2 Volunteer Perspective:

Evidence to date suggests that volunteers involved with befriending projects are benefitting from a range of positive outcomes, many of which are similar to those enjoyed by beneficiaries. Positive outcomes for volunteers include:

- A sense of reduced isolation generated by their involvement in the project and helped by 'feeling needed again' and by 'doing something worthwhile'.
- Increased levels of confidence and self-esteem.
- The development of new skills and strengthening of existing ones.

The evidence shows that a key learning point is that building the relationship between volunteer befrienders and beneficiaries takes time and should not be rushed.

Volunteers feel that the changes and outcomes they help create for beneficiaries can sometimes appear quite small, but are nevertheless significant in terms of the impact they have on people's lives and well-being.

Key learning points from a volunteer perspective include the need to consider preparing them for difficult situations (e.g. where beneficiaries suffer from depression or may be recovering from a stroke). This underlines the importance of the matching process and not exposing volunteers to inappropriate situations.

5.6.3 Outcomes for Public Service Providers/Agencies:

There is some (albeit limited) evidence to suggest that AdvantAGE befriending projects are having the effect of relieving pressure on over-stretched staff in some public sector organisations.

Agencies that refer service users to AdvantAGE befriending projects are getting positive feedback (albeit anecdotal) about the outcomes for supported individuals.

Projects may be helping to reduce referrals to public services that are under pressure (e.g. local authority social services) though it is not possible to quantify this in any meaningful way to date.

Projects are also helping agencies make more accurate and well-informed referrals (e.g. social workers) with the outcome of service users being referred to services that are more appropriate to their individual needs.

5.7 Qualitative Evidence – What difference has been made?

In this section of the report, we present a selection of case study material collated by some of the AdvantAGE befriending projects. The case studies have been anonymised.

Case Study 1: A beneficiary of the West Wales Befriending Links – Age Cymru Sir Gar Project⁴²

Mrs Y is 73 and lives alone. All Mrs Y's family live away. I have not visited Mrs Y's home, her referral came via her son.

After years of living a very healthy and active life, Mrs Y has had a stroke and as a result of this, she is now confined to a wheelchair and is also reliant on oxygen. She very rarely gets out due to these factors and is socially isolated and lonely.

Mrs Y's son contacted me regarding one of the project's dining groups. He was down on holiday and saw a poster in their village. I then had a long chat with the group volunteer regarding Mrs Y's condition and we agreed to let her join the group as a trial, to see whether Mrs Y can tend to her own personal needs e.g. toileting and administering her oxygen - I did not want to put any added work onto my volunteer, or for her to take on too much

⁴² Evaluation Report – West Wales Befriending Links. September 2013. Page 22.

responsibility.

Mrs Y has attended the group twice, and has enjoyed herself and is going to continue attending the group. Apart from this group, Mrs Y does not manage to get to any other social occasions.

We have another member attending the group who is confined to a wheelchair and Mrs Y sat with this lady. They both seemed to hit it off and are starting to form a friendship.

Mrs Y has stated that it is nice for her to get out for a change as she normally feels a prisoner in her own home.

Case Study 2: A volunteer involved in helping to deliver the Mental Health Matters Wales 'Moving on' project⁴³

When I first came to MHM Wales about 3 years ago I was anxious, depressed and suffered with agoraphobia. MHM Wales helped me through this difficult time. Through MHM Wales I found out about the befriending scheme and self-referred myself.

I was introduced to a befriender and we did many things together which helped me to overcome my agoraphobia and to build my confidence and self-esteem. With the help of the befriender I now catch the bus on my own and have been on a confidence building course and feel happier and more confident. I attended an award ceremony with MHM Wales and felt confident enough to make a speech. I don't feel so isolated anymore. I personally found the befriending scheme very helpful when you are suffering from a social phobia or bouts of depression it is very hard to go out and socialise as you have no confidence in yourself.

I am much more confident now so much so that I actually volunteer. I volunteer 4 times a week now, 2 days in Nolton Hall Wellbeing Centre and 2 days in the Over's 50 community café. I help out by setting up chairs and tables, collecting cups, talking to other people, interacting with other people by playing chess, draughts, etc. I am also involved in the gardening activities.

I enjoy art so I set up the art & craft tables and help anybody interested in drawing and painting. I also help other people who come to Nolton Church Hall to teach art and crafts.

After the art sessions I help to clear the tables and put things away.

Volunteering gives my life more sense of purpose and a feeling of being useful which I think is very important to me.

Case Study 3 – A beneficiary of the Gofal Project – British Red Cross⁴⁴

The service user is a gentleman aged 57 who was referred to the Gofal service by the British Legion after relocating to the area following his divorce. He used to be in the services and was receiving assistance from the British Legion with regard to furniture for his new home and advice on his benefit entitlements.

It was felt that the beneficiary would also benefit from some emotional support through the Gofal service to give him the opportunity to talk about his past and his recent divorce. The beneficiary had had four heart attacks in the past and had suffered with bouts of depression and suicidal feelings. His only companion was his dog whom he adored.

⁴³ 'Moving On' Over 50's Befriending Project Report. Date unknown. Page 5.

⁴⁴ Evaluation Gofal Befriending Service Document, Page 17

After an initial assessment carried out by the area team leader, the following action was taken:

- Information was sent to the beneficiary on local cleaning services.
- A referral was made to the Not Forgotten Association for a possible new TV for the beneficiary and assistance with payment of his TV Licence.
- Information was given to the beneficiary on possible sources of funding for a laptop and associated equipment.

The beneficiary was then visited and supported on the telephone for a period of two months as part of the Gofal service. During this time, the project volunteer gave the beneficiary the opportunity to talk about the difficulties of recent months and also helped him to gain confidence in walking his dog in the local area. The volunteer also encouraged the beneficiary to talk with his new neighbours and gave him information on local social activities for him to consider in the future.

Following on from the Gofal support, the beneficiary has received a new television set and stand and payment for two years of his TV Licence. He has also gained the confidence to apply for a discounted laptop through a local social enterprise and made enquiries about local computer courses and classes. He has made two new friends in his local community with whom he can go fishing.

At the end of the service, the beneficiary praised both the British Legion and the British Red Cross for all of their support and described himself as now “feeling at home”. He went on to say that he has now found the motivation to begin redecorating his home and is beginning to make plans for the future by looking into Open University courses he may be able to complete. At the time of final assessment, the beneficiary had also gone two weeks without a cigarette, something he’d been trying to achieve for some time.

Case Study 4 – A beneficiary of the Powys Befrienders project - PAVO⁴⁵

Beneficiary H was referred to Powys Befrienders from the Red Cross. She is a widower, eighty years old and had knee replacement surgery and would be in their care for six weeks following her knee operation.

Prior to her knee surgery beneficiary H had led a very active life, she was able to walk the short distance from her bungalow to catch the bus into the local town where she would do her shopping, meet her friends and attended a monthly luncheon club. Beneficiary H was also able to attend to her garden which was something she enjoyed very much. Due to the surgery she was house bound for a temporary period.

Beneficiary H’s son visited in the morning and evening to ensure she had meals but she missed being able to get out, and whilst she remained in contact with her friends via the telephone, she became lonely and isolated due to her lack of mobility albeit temporary.

Volunteer B is a volunteer with the Powys Befrienders project...and she now explains how she became a befriender for beneficiary H and the impact the volunteering role has had on her.

Volunteer B:

⁴⁵ Source: Powys Befrienders.

'I heard about Powys Befrienders through working with Jill [the Powys Befrienders Outreach Officer], and felt it was something I wanted to do because I live 200 miles from my own elderly mother and I know she has a terrific network of friends to support her so I would like to "payback" this service by befriending someone where I live who, perhaps didn't have the same support.

I was supported through excellent training to understand what the role entailed and was then carefully matched with the client I was paired with.

Jill took me along to introduce me and I don't think beneficiary H and I have stopped talking since. Beneficiary H has a wealth of knowledge on gardening and I am brand new to it but very keen. I am able to drive us about to visit garden centres etc. where we have great fun choosing plants and discussing the development of our gardens. I have also talked to beneficiary H about joining a local club for more company and last week I was delighted when she told me she had attended the meeting and enjoyed the company.

What a brilliant service! I do just feel a bit guilty though as I didn't expect that being a volunteer would benefit me in the way it has, from the wealth of her knowledge beneficiary H has shared with me. Thank you'

Beneficiary H at a recent review commented that she is now able to walk unaided, being able to go out with someone, has given her the confidence to go from two crutches to one crutch and she now walks completely unaided. She said:

'When I first met volunteer B and I learnt that she has a motorbike, I thought will we have anything in common to talk about - but I have learnt that we share many common interests. I look forward to her weekly visits, we laugh a lot and I have now started to attend the Forden Friendly Society with her encouragement, and met others in my local community'.

Beneficiary H is now able to shop for herself and she commented that 'I feel that I'm getting back to how things used to be before my knee surgery'.

Beneficiary H is aware that the service Powys Befrienders provide is time limited, but feels she is better able to cope with day to day living than at the time she commenced the service. Beneficiary H and volunteer B have already made an arrangement to continue to meet on a weekly basis at the end of the twelve month period because they enjoy each other's company so much.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Definitional Issues

Loneliness and social isolation, despite sometimes being used interchangeably and as if they were synonymous, are in practice two different concepts. Academic literature suggests that both loneliness and social isolation can be damaging to mental health and quality of life for older people.

Befriending is increasingly being recognised as one way of tackling the worst aspects of social isolation, but this is still a relatively recent development.

There are different definitions of the practice of befriending. Befriending itself can be 'delivered' in a variety of different ways e.g. via phone or on-line, in group based activities or via one to one settings.

There is a distinct lack of evaluation evidence (internationally) about what works in relation to befriending interventions.

6.2 The Welsh Policy Context

Social isolation is recognised as an issue within the Strategy for Older People in Wales but the strategy itself stops short of identifying befriending specifically as a way of tackling it.

The same is true of the Older People's Commissioner whose 2013-2017 Framework for action highlights loneliness and social isolation as issues, but does not mention befriending as a solution.

There is no mention of loneliness, social isolation or befriending in the Social Services (Wales) Act 2014.

Research by the Welsh Government (2013) suggests that while there is a wider body of evidence that loneliness and social isolation are causes for concern, the solutions to these problems do not receive detailed policy consideration. This means that definitions, interventions and evaluations are all currently under-developed and there is a gap in knowledge about evidence-based best practice.

6.3 Approaches to Monitoring and Evaluation

The befriending projects have adopted slightly different approaches to the way they go about monitoring and evaluating what they do. This is not necessarily problematic, though it does make meta-analysis at a programme level somewhat more challenging. A key learning point to emerge from this work is that it makes sense for the Big Lottery Fund to be more specific in recommending consistent approaches to gathering information and evidence at the outset of programmes like AdvantAGE.

This clearly needs to be carefully balanced with the Fund's laudable aims of not wishing to become overly prescriptive in its approach and to remain an outcomes based funder. In this context, introducing more specific guidance via self-evaluation support at an earlier stage would benefit the comparability and robustness of project level monitoring information and evaluation evidence.

The work undertaken by befriending projects (and their advocacy colleagues via the AWAEN⁴⁶ network) to bring together monitoring information and evaluation evidence for

⁴⁶ All Wales Advocacy Evaluation Network

collective analysis, using the resources of the self-evaluation support provider in the way that they have has been particularly innovative.

This has enabled the projects to share the learning from their work in a formative way (i.e. during implementation) rather than waiting until the end of the funding to do so. This has undoubtedly enabled the projects to fulfil the fourth outcome of AdvantAGE i.e. to demonstrate the impact and promote the development of advocacy services. Working together has also provided greater influence, not least in feeding evaluation evidence into the wider debate on the ageing population in Wales and its associated challenges.

6.4 Performance

The evidence gathered demonstrates that the AdvantAGE befriending projects are delivering activity which is in-line with the programme and individual project objectives.

As of May 2015, 8,382 beneficiaries have been supported by 17 of the 20 befriending projects which represents an achievement of 72 percent against the overall target of 11,610.

Taken in the context of the original budget of £13.3m (for all 20 projects) this means that each beneficiary costs an average of just over £1,500 to support.

Between them, the 17 projects that supplied information have also managed to recruit 1,378 volunteers which is a very positive achievement.

Feedback from beneficiaries, volunteers and other service providers demonstrates that overall, AdvantAGE befriending projects and their activities are of a high quality and are well received.

6.5 Outcomes

Beneficiaries supported by AdvantAGE befriending projects have experienced a range of positive outcomes that are contributing to reduced loneliness and isolation and are improving their levels of social interaction. Key outcomes in this respect include improved confidence levels, sustainable new friendships having been established, stronger networks, an up-lift in general outlook as well as physical, mental and emotional improvements.

Volunteers too are getting a lot out of their involvement with the befriending projects. Many report improved levels of self-esteem and self-worth as a result of feeling needed and useful again while there is also evidence of some volunteers having gained new skills.

While the evidence is more limited, it seems clear that AdvantAGE befriending projects are also having a positive effect by relieving pressure (for instance via a reduction in referrals) on over-stretched public services. The data from projects does not allow us to quantify this, but it is an area in which projects (and their evaluation partners) should continue to gather evidence.

TECHNICAL ANNEX 1

Overview of AdvantAGE Befriending Projects

Project Name	West Wales Befriending Links Project.
Lead Sponsor	Age Cymru Sir Gar.
Area(s) covered	Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire
Project Duration	Five years
Staff Resources	Staff numbers unknown
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Yes
Brief project description	The purpose of this project is to create a befriending service delivered through 40 activity based friendship groups in the rural counties of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. The project is delivered by the three Age Concern organisations in these areas. The befriending service aims to help increase social interaction amongst older people before they have become seriously socially isolated. The project is intended to be a preventative rather than a reactionary service.
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: To reduce the feelings of loneliness and isolation felt by more than 60% of those engaging with the project throughout the region.</p> <p>Outcome 2: To raise the self-esteem and self-confidence of more than 60% of people engaging with the project.</p> <p>Outcome 3: To demonstrate the impact of social inclusion.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>External project level evaluation report prepared by WCVA (September 2013)</p> <p>Monitoring data on volunteers, members and groups participating in the project to April 2014.</p> <p>2 x Evaluation Report supplements containing qualitative evidence gathered via. case studies and semi-structured interviews with centre managers (October 2014)</p> <p>Project overview PowerPoint presentation (September 2014) containing data</p>

Project Name	The Rainbow Befriending Project.
Lead Sponsor	Penley Rainbow Centre
Area(s) covered	Rural community of Wrexham Maelor South
Project Duration	Five years
Staff Resources	Three part time staff
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Yes
Brief project description	The project offers a long term voluntary befriending service to the over 50's who are going through life transition due to retirement, ill health or bereavement and who may also be experiencing isolation or loneliness due to loss of confidence or reduced mobility. The service provides one-to-one companionship, access to activities and the development of social networks through the Rainbow Centre.
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: By the end of the 5 years, 200 isolated over 50's will report having reduced loneliness and strengthened social networks within their community.</p> <p>Outcome 2: By the end of the project 200 isolated over 50s will report increased confidence and an increased ability to manage their life challenges as a result of the project.</p> <p>Outcome 3: By the end of the 5 year project we will have a strong evidence base to support the benefits of befriending for both the recipient and the volunteer befriender in improving the health and well-being of over 50s.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Big Lottery Fund Project Monitoring Form for period 21.09.13 to 20.09.14</p> <p>End of Year 2 Project Level Evaluation Report</p> <p>End of Year 3 Project Level Evaluation Report</p> <p>Rainbow Befriending Project Evaluation Report. February 2013.</p>

Project Name	Community Connections Befriending Scheme
Lead Sponsor	The Bridges Community Centre.
Area(s) covered	Monmouthshire
Project Duration	Five years
Staff Resources	Three full time staff
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Yes
Brief project description	The project links volunteers with people over fifty who are isolated. Two community centres provide bases for the project and centre facilities are used to put on regular social activity groups. Beneficiaries of the project are encouraged to assess their own support and befriending needs with the help of project coordinators and volunteers. Beneficiaries are encouraged to 'give' as well as 'receive' support.
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: By the end of the project 400 people will report an increase in wellbeing and reduced isolation through engaging in activities in the community.</p> <p>Outcome 2: By the end of the project 400 people will report a reduction in loneliness and an increased feeling of wellbeing and confidence through the support of the befriending service.</p> <p>Outcome 3: By the end of the project there will be evidence of the impact of befriending on people's wellbeing and an end of project report will provide a model of good practice that could be replicated in other areas</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>External project level evaluation reports prepared by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (June 2013 and December 2014)</p> <p>Process report and evaluation framework prepared by external evaluator. (November 2012)</p> <p>Big Lottery Fund Progress Report, for period ending October 2014</p> <p>Detailed evidence paper containing progress against key targets, referral sources, beneficiary data and qualitative evidence.</p> <p>Copy of Version 1 of Meta-Analysis Report with annotations</p> <p>Summary of Approved Provider Standard Assessment Report</p>

Project Name	GreengAGE
Lead Sponsor	Gofal
Area(s) covered	Cardiff
Project Duration	Three years
Staff Resources	Four full time and one part time staff
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Yes – for final evaluation only
Brief project description	The Home Allotment Volunteers project aims to address social isolation in people aged 50+ in Cardiff, through Volunteer Befrienders providing a one to one befriending service with the specific purpose of providing companionship, encouraging beneficiaries to grow food, increasing their exercise, developing self-confidence and increasing their social contact and participation in local horticultural and social activities. The volunteers are supported by two Older Persons Support Workers who have specialist skills in horticulture, older people and mental health.
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: At least 85% of the 100 project beneficiaries, during the life of the project, will report feeling reduced loneliness, improved mental health and well-being, and a more active social network through participating in the HAV project</p> <p>Outcome 2: By the end of the project, beneficiaries will report having increased confidence and more active both inside and outside of their home, with 75% of 100 people reporting feeling more able to take on the challenges and opportunities of aging</p> <p>Outcome 3: Through a mixture of self and independently evaluated evidence, we will demonstrate that befriending activity focused around existing community activity, in this case allotments, positively impacts on the health, wellbeing, confidence and social interaction of older people.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet providing information on beneficiaries, referral sources, data on intensity of intervention and limited data on outcomes.</p> <p>End of Year Three Report to Big Lottery Fund (covering period December 2013 to December 2014)</p>

Project Name	Community Companions Project.
Lead Sponsor	Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations
Area(s) covered	Bridgend
Project Duration	Unknown
Staff Resources	Unknown
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Yes
Brief project description	<p>The project provides Community Cafes and one to one befriending for older people across Bridgend. 'Social Involvers' act as one to one befrienders for up to two hours a week. This can involve phoning someone for a chat, providing support to attend appointments, or visiting someone at home. They also promote the Community Cafes, which run for three hours a week from venues in the community. This project set out to develop two existing cafes and to establish four more in Bridgend County. Partners include Age Concern Morgannwg, Bridgend County Borough Council, SHOUT, Crossroads Care, Scope, Mental Health Matters Wales, Bridgend People First, Ogwr DASH, and Bridgend Carers Centre.</p>
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: By the end of the project 800 isolated people aged fifty plus will report decreased anxiety and increased motivation to develop and maintain social networks.</p> <p>Outcome 2: By the end of the project, 1000 beneficiaries will report an increase in self-confidence and improved engagement within the local community.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Following the end of the project, the evaluation will create a greater evidence base demonstrating the importance of befriending for isolated people aged fifty plus in all aspects of physical health, emotional wellbeing and community cohesion.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Results Based Accountability Report prepared by the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care (WIHSC), University of South Wales. (October 2013)</p> <p>'Emerging Findings and Views – Beneficiaries' Report by WIHSC (December 2013)</p> <p>Volunteer Survey Summary Report by WIHSC (December 2013)</p> <p>Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard. Final Report prepared by WCVA (September 2013)</p> <p>Community Cafes Year 2 (2013) Report.</p> <p>Big Lottery Fund Project Monitoring Form for period 26.06.13 to 25.06.14</p>

	<p>Results Based Accountability Report prepared by WIHSC, UoSW (December 2014)</p> <p>'Emerging Findings and Views – Beneficiaries' Report by WIHSC (December 2014)</p> <p>Volunteer Survey Summary Report by WIHSC (December 2014)</p>
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Project Name	Ffrindia
Lead Sponsor	Mantell Gwynedd
Area(s) covered	North Wales
Project Duration	Five years
Staff Resources	Four staff – unknown if full or part time
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Unknown
Brief project description	Ffrindia is a one to one befriending service with the aim of supporting lonely or isolated individuals to reconnect with their communities. The project is managed by Mantell Gwynedd in partnership with Age Cymru Gwynedd and Mon and Carers Outreach Gwynedd and Môn.
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: 225 volunteers and 33 mentors in addition to community leaders being identified to facilitate access to community networks in the three areas. They will have more self-confidence and will be empowered to participate more in their local communities in addition to the mentors who will be promoting the sustainability of the scheme.</p> <p>Outcome 2: 510 beneficiaries (individual) who are experiencing loneliness and low confidence report they can live a more independent life, integrate better in the community and feel they have better access to support services.</p> <p>Outcome 3: The project will provide a strong evidence base which indicates that the befriending service has had a key role in keeping older people independent and valued participants within their community.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Gwynedd Demonstration Site – Chronic Conditions Management. Proposed Volunteer Community Health Guardians. Project Proposal Document (Undated).</p> <p>Information on beneficiaries, intensity of intervention, overview of activities delivered, data on referral sources and some information on beneficiary feedback relating to services provided.</p> <p>Word document providing project update, September 2014/</p>

Project Name	Friends for Life
Lead Sponsor	Age Connects Torfaen
Area(s) covered	Torfaen
Project Duration	Unknown
Staff Resources	One full time member of staff. Six part time support workers.
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Yes
Brief project description	This project provides a befriending service through the use of community hubs in six different locations across Torfaen. The service provides befriending in different models from support groups and exercise and fitness classes, to social meetings and interest groups. Alongside providing social hubs for isolated older people, the project targets a range of specific groups of individuals. A formal partnership with MIND and Crossroads Care assists the project to target carers and older people with mental health problems.
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: By end of the project 2000 beneficiaries will have increased their well-being by improved knowledge and become socially active in their communities within Torfaen</p> <p>Outcome 2: By end of the project 2000 beneficiaries will have increased their confidence and feel better equipped to live in a community as a result of accessing Befriending Hubs</p> <p>Outcome 3: Findings will be communicated to relevant bodies to influence planning of future service delivery to socially isolated older people.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Friends for Life Project Evaluation: Qualitative Summary Report prepared by WIHSC (January 2014)</p> <p>Friends for Life Project Evaluation: First RBA Report prepared by WIHSC (November 2014)</p> <p>Word document providing project update, September 2014.</p>

Project Name	Gofal
Lead Sponsor	British Red Cross
Area(s) covered	North Wales
Project Duration	Unknown
Staff Resources	10 full time staff
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Yes (as part of wider all-Wales evaluation of project)
Brief project description	This project builds on a pilot one to one befriending scheme and outreach mobile unit based in Denbighshire. The project expands the reach of the service across the entire North Wales region, developing the original services based on the feedback recommendations from the evaluation of the pilot project, and by creating formal partnerships with key strategic organisations.
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: By the end of the project, 3000 isolated older people in North Wales will report improved emotional and mental wellbeing, and increased levels of companionship via support from volunteer befrienders leading to improved social activities and a personal map of social contacts / networks. Outcomes for individual beneficiaries will be evidenced via the use of well-being wheels to track change during the support period.</p> <p>Outcome 2: By the end of the project, 3000 isolated older people in North Wales will report increased levels of motivation, self-esteem, independent living, and ability to self-manage via support from a befriender who will work through an individualised action plan and a personal map of social contacts for each beneficiary. Outcomes for individual beneficiaries will be evidenced by use of well-being wheels to track change during the support period.</p> <p>Outcome 3: By the end of the project will have improved and enhanced policy, commissioning priorities and decisions for older people's services in Wales, by providing a clear evidence base for the efficacy of one-to-one support and befriending interventions at reducing social isolation and loneliness amongst older people.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Information provided on project outcomes and milestones, beneficiary data (including performance against targets), intensity and type of intervention, volunteer and staff data, evidence from beneficiaries (satisfaction, relevance and outcomes) and case studies.</p> <p>Gofal Befriending Service Project Report, November 2011 – January 2015.</p> <p>Evaluation of Gofal (North Wales) Interim Report by WIHSC. October 2014.</p>

Project Name	Moving on Befriending and Monitoring Scheme
Lead Sponsor	Mental Health Matters Wales
Area(s) covered	Bridgend
Project Duration	Five Years
Staff Resources	Three part time staff
Commissioned external Evaluation?	The 'Moving On' Befriending and Mentoring project is led by Mental Health Matters Wales Ltd, formerly in partnership with Bridgend People First who are a learning disability organisation. The project supports people aged 50+ who are socially isolated due to mental health issues or learning disabilities, prioritising those who do not have family and friends in Bridgend County Borough. Volunteer befrienders provide specialist one to one befriending support for beneficiaries to enable them to access a range existing activities and services provided by both organisations, and also using their extensive links with the statutory and voluntary sector to access social, leisure, educational and back to work opportunities. By beneficiaries becoming actively engaged in the community, the project also aims to tackle discrimination and stigma.
Brief project description	No
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: By the end of the project term to have evidenced 200 people have increased wellbeing through social interaction and inclusion and therefore reducing loneliness.</p> <p>Outcome 2: By the end of the project to have recruited 10 volunteers who have been in receipt of mental health or learning disability services to achieve their full potential to become Befrienders.</p> <p>Outcome 3: At the end of the project term to evidence through referral forms, monitoring documents and exit interviews which will demonstrate the project has met its objectives.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Information provided on project milestones, beneficiary data, details of services provided, data on volunteers and staff resources and case study material.</p> <p>Three project newsletters for Autumn 2012, November 2013 and March 2014.</p> <p>Word document providing project update, September 2014</p>

Project Name	Community Links Neath Port Talbot.
Lead Sponsor	Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services
Area(s) covered	Neath Port Talbot
Project Duration	Five years
Staff Resources	One full time. One part time ⁴⁷ .
Commissioned external Evaluation?	No
Brief project description	The Community Links project aims to address social isolation, exclusion and loneliness particularly in people aged 65 years and over. The overall aim is to enhance quality of life and improve emotional health and wellbeing. It provides a befriending service tailored to Individual needs. Through volunteer befrienders older people benefit from companionship, human support and contact, and if they choose to do so, from re-engaging in their communities.
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: By the end of the project 300 socially isolated older people will have new a social network and increased well-being as a result of involvement with the project</p> <p>Outcome 2: By the end of the project 200 socially isolated older people will have increased confidence and ability to undertake activities that promote independence</p> <p>Outcome 3: By the end of the project findings will be compared with the initial baseline data to evidence the positive impact that the various befriending activities have made to older people.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Information on project aims, referrals, beneficiaries supported, intensity of intervention, feedback from beneficiaries on the service received and case study material.</p> <p>Various qualitative information gathered from specific event/clubs supported by the project</p> <p>Data gathered at two further events, including a project specific evaluation event</p> <p>End of Year Three Project Monitoring Form for Big Lottery Fund (covering period December 2013 to December 2014)</p>

⁴⁷ Due to project underspend, the part time worker has been working on a full time basis.

Project Name	Friendly AdvantAGE Project
Lead Sponsor	Vale Centre for Voluntary Services
Area(s) covered	Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan
Project Duration	Four Years
Staff Resources	Seven project staff (one full time and six part time).
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Yes
Brief project description	The Friendly Advantage project offers a range of befriending models to reduce loneliness and isolation and improve wellbeing of older people in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. The project is being delivered through a consortium of service providers; Age Concern Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, ACE Cardiff, Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern and Scope Cymru.
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: 80% (720) of 900 project beneficiaries will have increased social interaction and wellbeing by the end of the project</p> <p>Outcome 2: 80% (720) of 900 project beneficiaries will report an increase in their confidence levels by the end of the project</p> <p>Outcome 3: We will publish evidence based befriending models to promote their value, and share as best practice</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Friendly AdvantAGE Evaluation: RBA Report prepared by WIHSC (October 2012).</p> <p>Friendly AdvantAGE Evaluation: RBA Report prepared by WIHSC (April 2013).</p> <p>Friendly AdvantAGE Evaluation: RBA Report prepared by WIHSC (October 2013).</p> <p>Friendly AdvantAGE Evaluation: RBA Report prepared by WIHSC (April 2014)</p> <p>A selection of qualitative case studies, including a transcript of an interview with a beneficiary and volunteer</p> <p>Initial Report for Rural Connections, Part of Friendly AdvantAGE. Emerging themes from interviews with beneficiaries. Prepared by WIHSC (October 2013).</p> <p>Initial Report for Friendly AdvantAGE. Emerging findings and views from beneficiaries. Prepared by WIHSC (December 2013).</p> <p>Additional information provided on performance against targets and milestones, beneficiary referrals and volunteers.</p> <p>Examples of beneficiary review form, beneficiary exit</p>

	interview form, volunteer interview form and feedback on social event (2) Copy of reporting templates
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Project Name	Meet Hear. Action on Hearing Loss.
Lead Sponsor	Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)
Area(s) covered	All Wales
Project Duration	Unknown
Staff Resources	Two full time staff. Three part-time about to be recruited.
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Unknown
Brief project description	The project supports older people with hearing loss and those at risk of experiencing loneliness to overcome the barriers of social exclusion by providing a mutually supportive relationship to build confidence and aid accessibility to community services.
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: By the end of the project 840 older people with hearing loss will report reduced loneliness and increased wellbeing as a result of the project providing opportunities for increased social interaction with other older people who share their experiences of hearing loss.</p> <p>Outcome 2: By the end of the project 840 older people with hearing loss will report that they are more confident as a result of engaging with the project and are more able to engage with other organisations, services and individuals within their communities.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Results of the project evaluation will demonstrate the impact of befriending services specifically designed to meet the needs of older people with hearing loss and will provide a tool kit that could be used to replicate the project in other areas.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Information provided on beneficiaries supported, volunteers recruited, feedback from beneficiaries and some beneficiary quotes on the service.</p> <p>PowerPoint Presentation with beneficiary quotes and images.</p> <p>Copy (blank) of end of intervention beneficiary questionnaire.</p>

Project Name	InTouch Project
Lead Sponsor	Deafblind Cymru
Area(s) covered	All Wales but focused on Conwy, Wrexham, Denbighshire, Gwynedd, Newport, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, and Carmarthenshire
Project Duration	Three Years
Staff Resources	Two full time staff. Four part time staff.
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Yes
Brief project description	<p>The In Touch Wales project, for Deafblind UK aims to reduce social isolation, strengthen wellbeing, and increase support of older deafblind people, over the age of 50, throughout Wales. The project has the aim of facilitating a greater involvement, and a greater use of local community opportunities and services.</p> <p>By matching older deafblind people, to volunteer befrienders, the project aims to improve the quality of life, increase wellbeing, whilst concurrently reducing social isolation and loneliness.</p>
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: 120 deafblind people, over the age of 50 will be supported and matched to a volunteer befriender over the three years of the project.</p> <p>Outcome 2: 39 volunteer befrienders will be recruited to support deafblind beneficiaries and provide regular social contact.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Report entitled 'The impact of volunteer befriending on social isolation in community-dwelling deafblind older people in Wales: A qualitative study of participants' experiences'. (October 2013) Prepared by Deafblind Cymru.</p> <p>External Evaluation Report by B.Peckford (February 2015) based on a desk-based evidence review and interviews with project staff, beneficiaries, volunteers and key stakeholders.</p> <p>Information provided on the project team, the approach to self-evaluation, beneficiaries supported, volunteers recruited, intensity of intervention, feedback from beneficiaries and case study material.</p> <p>Word document detailing project activity and providing some qualitative feedback</p>

Project Name	Cadwyn Mon
Lead Sponsor	Age Cymru Gwynedd a Mon
Area(s) covered	Gwynedd and Anglesey
Project Duration	Unknown
Staff Resources	Four members of staff
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Yes
Brief project description	The project aims to bridge the gap between older people, community activities and the existing 'Ageing Well' centres. The project utilises volunteer befrienders who visit older people referred by partner organisations. One-to-one support is offered to older people designed to boost their confidence to take part in community activities or attend the 'Ageing Well' centres.
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: By the end of the project 100 voluntary befrienders and 500 older people will receive information and support to improve their skills, confidence and their ability to deal with the challenges of ageing.</p> <p>Outcome 2: By the end of the project 500 older people will report that they feel less isolated and that their health and wellbeing has benefitted through participation in their local communities.</p> <p>Outcome 3: During and at the end of the project, the evidence collected will demonstrate the influence and effect of the befriending service on individuals and communities. This will be presented to our partners to ensure funding to continue with the work.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Report entitled 'The impact of volunteer befriending on social isolation in community-dwelling deafblind older people in Wales: A qualitative study of participants' experiences'. (October 2013) Prepared by Deafblind Cymru.</p> <p>Information provided on the project team, the approach to self-evaluation, beneficiaries supported, volunteers recruited, intensity of intervention, feedback from beneficiaries and case study material.</p>

Project Name	Rural Friendships
Lead Sponsor	PAVO
Area(s) covered	Powys
Project Duration	Unknown
Staff Resources	One full time and three part time staff
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Yes
Brief project description	This project is delivered by Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO) in partnership with, 12 local volunteer bureaux/Community Support Organisations and Healthy Friendships which is a mental health charity. The project aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness, and increase confidence and independence in older people living in Powys, by providing one to one volunteer befriending services across the county that enable beneficiaries to develop social networks through participating in hobbies, interests and social activities they enjoy. The project enables Healthy Friendships to expand their existing befriending services for those suffering mental distress into the south of the county.
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: After 5 years 400 older people will have increased wellbeing through engaging with their community as a result of befriending support.</p> <p>Outcome 2: After 5 years 250 of the 400 older people become more independent and do not require access to greater care or support needs, due to receiving befriending support</p> <p>Outcome 3: The evaluation demonstrates the impact of befriending to funders and identifies ways to develop the service for its future sustainability.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Selection of case studies based on supported beneficiaries.</p> <p>Excel spreadsheet providing information relating to volunteer and client referrals.</p> <p>Tabular breakdown of project milestones via participating partners.</p> <p>Big Lottery Fund End of Year Reports for 2012 and 2014, Mid-Year Reports for 2012 and 2013</p> <p>End of Year Three Report, produced by the Institute of Rural Health. January 2014.</p>

Project Name	Welcome Friends Project
Lead Sponsor	CSV
Area(s) covered	Project 1(South) - Blaenau Gwent and Rhondda Cynon Taf Project 2 (West) – Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire
Project Duration	Five years
Staff Resources	Two full time staff, six part time staff
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Yes
Brief project description	<p>RSVP identified the need to tackle the problems of loneliness and isolation for older people, but also to adopt approaches which prevent younger people aged 50+ from becoming lonely or isolated. The two 'Welcome Friends' projects aim to accomplish this by creating and maintaining social networks and opportunities and by working particularly with those who are most 'at risk', during crucial life transitions such as redundancy, bereavement, retirement or divorce. In addition they aim to develop complementary partnership relationships with other befriending schemes to enable people to be signposted to the most appropriate opportunity. Welcome Friends provides a preventative approach to loneliness and isolation based on a model of progression from dependency through support to independent social activity which will preserve dignity and choice for beneficiaries and promote a cycle of achievement. The project aims to reach as many older people as possible by recruiting older people as volunteers, supporting older people to access new or existing social networks and providing progressive 1-1 befriending for older people with greater support needs.</p> <p>Each project comprises two development areas, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire making up the west project, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Blaenau Gwent making up the south project. A senior development worker and project worker are based within each initiative, and all areas share the services of a dedicated administrator. However, the south project currently operates with three members of staff, the RCT role as a job-share. These are all part-time roles.</p>
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: Increase social interaction for 1200 older people so that they significantly improve their sense of well-being.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Increase the confidence and self-esteem of 1200 older people so that they make positive choices about engagement and personal development</p>

	Outcome 3: Improved evidence of the positive impact of befriending is promoted to local and national policy and decision makers
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Welcome Friends Interim Evaluation Report (2012). Prepared by the Beth Johnson Foundation.</p> <p>Evaluation Report: Welcome Friends Second Annual Report (2013). Prepared by the Beth Johnson Foundation.</p> <p>Evaluation Report: Welcome Friends Third Annual Report (2014). Prepared by the Beth Johnson Foundation.</p> <p>Project update forms for South and West area (2014)</p> <p>Copies of Meta-Analysis Reports (Versions 1 and 2) with annotations</p>

Project Name	Neighbourliness II
Lead Sponsor	Age Connects Neath Port Talbot
Area(s) covered	Neath Port Talbot
Project Duration	Three years, followed by extension period of unknown duration
Staff Resources	Two full time staff. One part time member of staff.
Commissioned external Evaluation?	Yes
Brief project description	<p>The Neighbourliness II Project, 'Promoting Independence through Neighbourliness' is a social rehabilitation befriending project, which has operated for three years across Neath Port Talbot. While service users are always very appreciative of traditional befriending, such schemes do create dependency. This project is deliberately designed to enable/encourage individuals to retain, and/or regain their independence. The project offers a variety of social, physical and health activities improving quality of life and filling gaps in provision for older people. The project works towards reducing loneliness, improving confidence, increasing well-being and social interaction.</p>
Overview of intended project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: By the end of the project, inclusive of project extension period, 700 previously isolated older people will participate in more community based social and leisure activities. This will build the beneficiaries' social networks and reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation;</p> <p>Outcome 2: With support from 50 Volunteer Senior Health Mentors, 700 local older people will experience measurable improvements in emotional and physical health and well-being by the end of the project. This will increase beneficiaries' confidence, and their ability to face the many challenges associated with growing old; and</p> <p>Outcome 3: By the end of the three year project, rigorous self and external evaluation will have demonstrated the impact on project beneficiaries, highlighted the value of a sustainable social rehabilitation befriending model, and contributed to the development of befriending services through widespread dissemination. As a minimum, the findings will be distributed to 64 relevant partnership organisations across Wales.</p>
Evaluation information/data/evidence available	<p>Information/Data/Evidence Available: Results Based Accountability Report - prepared by the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care (WIHSC), University of South Wales.</p> <p>Data Report for Age Connects Neath Port Talbot Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care , University of South Wales [February 2014]</p>

	<p>Emergent Themes and Views – Initial Report. Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care , University of South Wales [February 2013.]</p> <p>Word Document detailing project progress (March 2015)</p>
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TECHNICAL ANNEX 2

Overview of intended project level outcomes

Project name and lead sponsor	Overview of Intended Outcomes
The South West Wales Safeguarding Older People Project. Age Cymru Swansea Bay.	<p>Outcome 1: 1260 older people will have increased confidence and ability to meet the challenges and opportunities of ageing.</p> <p>Outcome 2: the findings brought about by our comprehensive evaluation will have demonstrated the impact that independent advocacy provision can have on improving the lives of vulnerable older people in Wales.</p> <p>Outcome 3: 1260 older people will have an increased understanding and use of their rights leading to improved choice and control over their own lives.</p>
The Voice and Choice project. Alzheimer's Society.	<p>The project will increase the confidence of 400 older people with dementia to meet the challenges and opportunities</p> <p>The project will empower 400 older people with dementia to keep control of their own lives for as long as possible</p> <p>The project will provide evidence that one of the National Dementia Vision for Wales objectives is being delivered successfully.</p>
North Wales Safeguarding Project. Age Connects North Wales Central.	<p>To support 2160 vulnerable older people aged 50 and over in North Wales to:</p> <p>Live more independently as a result of their confidence being boosted following the assistance of an advocate</p> <p>Have choice and control over their lives by having increased understanding, awareness and use of rights, resulting in enhanced levels of independence and self-respect</p> <p>Demonstrate the positive impact via external evaluation</p>
Wales Eye Patient Advocacy Service. RNIB.	<p>2400 people over three years receiving support at the point of diagnosis in the Hospital Eye Service.</p> <p>450 people diagnosed with sight loss access the benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>450 people with sight loss accessing local services to increase social intervention and improved well-being.</p>
South East Wales Safeguarding Older People Programme. Age Connects Cardiff and the Vale.	<p>Outcome 1: 2060 beneficiaries in SE Wales will be supported to live independently, they will have developed confidence, self-determination and emotional strength to cope with the challenges they face in their lives</p> <p>Outcome 2: 2060 beneficiaries in SE Wales will have choice and control over their own lives through the use of information and access to support that will allow them to exercise their rights</p> <p>Outcome 3: the findings will be communicated to 9 local authorities, 4 NHS local health boards, 6 Council's for Voluntary Services and the Welsh Assembly Government, through seminar reports that will influence improvements in policy, practice and services to vulnerable older people</p>
The Cyngor 50+ Advice	<p>Provide advice and advocacy to 360 people aged 50+ presenting with a housing issue.</p>

(Carmarthenshire Sheltered Homes Project). Shelter Cymru.	<p>Provide information to 600 people aged 50+ presenting with a housing issue.</p> <p>Provide support to 120 people aged 50+ presenting with a housing issue. (have asked for a reduction to the targets in Year 2 which if agreed will affect these figures)</p>
The Informed Choices project. Disability Powys.	<p>After 5 years 500 older carers will have been supported to plan for the transition in care giving them greater confidence about their future care</p> <p>After 5 years 500 older people who are cared for by another older person feel that they have more control over their life and better able to make informed choices about their life, care and support</p> <p>The Evaluation demonstrates the effectiveness of advocacy is providing appropriate care support for older disabled people</p>
The 50+ Autonomy Advocacy Project. Eiriol.	<p>By the end of the project 350 older people will have received 1:1 advocacy giving them increased confidence and ability to participate indecision making</p> <p>By the end of the project 1,000 older people will have received information and /or undertaken sessions to better understand their rights and protect their interests</p> <p>By the end of the project monitoring and evaluation demonstrates the project's effectiveness in improving the quality of life for older people and services to them, this being reported to local health and social care commissioners who may then commission longer term advocacy services</p>
Swansea Carers Centre advocacy project.	<p>Outcome 1 – By the end of the project, 650 older people who are carers will have developed increased confidence and ability to meet the challenges and opportunities they face on a daily basis</p> <p>Outcome 2 – By the end of the project 450 older people who are carers, will have gained an increased understanding of their rights, enabling them to access appropriate services for both themselves and the people they care for</p> <p>Outcome 3 – Through the dissemination of evaluation findings during years three and five, stakeholders will recognise the positive impact of the carers' advocacy service for older people who are carers across the City and County of Swansea</p>

TECHNICAL ANNEX 2

Evidence - Performance (Quantity) – How much has been done?

Project name and lead sponsor	Referrals/ Beneficiaries Supported to date	As % of overall target	Volunteers engaged to date	As % of overall target	Evidence on Beneficiaries and Volunteers	Nature of Intervention
West Wales Befriending Links Project. Age Cymru Sir Gar.	1,518 beneficiaries supported (Sept 2014) 1,790 referrals (Sept 2014)	87% (Target 1,750)	124 (Sept 2014)	45% (Target 276)	<p>The project evaluation report (September 2013)⁴⁸ found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64 befriending groups were active as of September 2014. • The majority of the project's beneficiaries (85%) were female • The vast majority (96%) of beneficiaries classified themselves as either white British or Welsh • Around a third (30%) of beneficiaries were bi-lingual or first language Welsh speakers • All beneficiaries were aged between 50 and 100. The largest group (33%) were aged between 70 and 79. The second largest group (26%) were aged between 80 and 89. • 28% of beneficiaries said they had a limiting health condition. • 48% of the project's beneficiaries said that they lived alone. 35% did not live alone and 20% declined to answer this question. 	<p>Average attendance at befriending groups facilitated by the project ranged from 2.4 people per session (Wendy's Friendship Group)⁴⁹ to 49.9 people per session (Tregaron Luncheon Club)⁵⁰.</p> <p>The September 2013 evaluation report, found that 'many of the closed groups met for a few weeks with low attendance. Some of the groups which are shown as open at the moment also have low attendance'⁵¹.</p> <p>By the end of the project, two groups were self-sustaining⁵².</p>
The Rainbow Befriending	322 (November)	161% (target)	30 (November)	N/A	The project's evaluation report from 2013 ⁵³ found that:	Mix of face to face, one-to-one befriending, counselling in the

⁴⁸ Source: Evaluation Report. West Wales Befriending Links. B Collis, WCVA. 9 September 2013.

⁴⁹ Ibid. Page 12.

⁵⁰ Ibid. Page 13.

⁵¹ Ibid. Page 10.

⁵² Source: West Wales Befriending Links Annual Report Presentation

⁵³ Source: Rainbow Befriending Project Evaluation Report. February 2013. Pages 7-8.

Project. Penley Rainbow Centre	2014)	200)	r 2014)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of beneficiaries accessing the project are aged 70 – 89 years old (69%) The majority (58%) have been living alone since being widowed 57% of beneficiaries considered themselves as disabled <p>Of the 30 volunteers involved in the project;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 73% are female, and 27% are male 67% are over 50 years old 97% are of white ethnic background 57% of volunteers are employed, 30% retired and 13% unemployed An average of 39 hours per week of voluntary service is taking place⁵⁴ 	home. Dementia specific activities (e.g. memory café, counselling), and leisure activities (e.g. dancing, knit and natter, Pilates etc...). Also programme of six-weekly courses.
Community Connections. The Bridges Community Centre.	163 (October 2014)	41% (Target 400)	162 (October 2014)	81%	<p><i>Beneficiaries:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 78% of beneficiaries supported are female, 22% male The majority of beneficiaries (82%) are over 80 years of age and are isolated mainly due to aging; loss of mobility and sensory impairment. 76% of beneficiaries receiving one to one home visits or 'help to get out on a regular basis'. 44% of befriending arrangements are now 'long-term self-sustaining relationships'. 36% of beneficiaries have 'no nearby supportive family'. 25% of beneficiaries live in rural areas. 32% of referrals (the largest grouping) come 	<p>Befriending arrangements 'take approximately two hours per week'.</p> <p>Group activities include three 'social activity' groups per week, with an average of 50 beneficiaries attending each session</p> <p>The project also organises additional 'one-off' activities and outings.</p> <p>115 volunteers have taken part in 15 training sessions⁵⁶</p>

⁵⁴ Ibid., Pages 6-7.

⁵⁶ Source: End of Year 3 Project Monitoring Form. Page 2.

					<p>from social services followed by health services (25%). 14% are self-referrals or referrals made by family members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 5% of referrals decline the project's support at initial contact for various reasons, though some of these re-contact the project for support at a later date. Approximately 50% of beneficiaries require 'some degree of support to communicate their needs with other agencies'. 26% of beneficiaries attend group activities organised by the project each month. 	
					<p><i>Volunteers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally around 70-80 'active' volunteers at any one time. Combined volunteer inputs amount to approximately 600 hours per month⁵⁵. 	
GreengAGE. Gofal.	82 (April 2014)	82% (Overall target of 100)	14 (April 2014)	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 54% of beneficiaries are female, 46% male 45% aged 50-79⁵⁷ 55% aged 80+⁵⁸ 73% supported in group settings 27% supported on one to one basis Majority of referrals received via care homes (73%)⁵⁹ 	
Community Companions Project. Bridgend	80 referrals (Dec 2013)	8% (overall target)	40 (Dec 2013)	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 34 befriending 'match ups' in 2013 668 befriending visits during 2013 302.5 volunteer hours during 2013⁶⁰ 	Mix of one to one 'home' befriending and four community cafés.

⁵⁵ Source: Monitoring information provided by the project to Old Bell 3 (April 2014).

⁵⁷ Based on data for 58 beneficiaries.

⁵⁸ Based on data for 58 beneficiaries.

⁵⁹ Source: Monitoring information provided by the project to Old Bell 3 (April 2014).

⁶⁰ Source: Project Monitoring Form submitted by BAVO to BIG for period 26.06.13 to 25.06.14

Association of Voluntary Organisations.	of 1,000 beneficiaries)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42% of beneficiaries aged between 50 and 79 39% of beneficiaries aged 80+ Age unknown for 19% of beneficiaries 77% beneficiaries male, 23% female 19% (equal largest group) of referrals from social services. Further 19% referred via friend Majority of beneficiaries (68%) living alone Majority of beneficiaries (65%) widowed 42 42% of beneficiaries had a physical disability⁶¹ 	
Ffrindia. Mantell Gwynedd.	178 (April 2014)	Unknown	91 (April 2014)	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38% of beneficiaries aged between 50-79 62% of beneficiaries aged 80+ 55% of beneficiaries referred from social services, 30% from health organisations, 10% self-referrals and 5% friends and family⁶² 	<p>Mix of one to one (in the home) befriending, visits, group walks, car trips and visits to 'ageing well' centres.</p> <p>Approximately 50% of the activity relates to one to one (in home) befriending.</p>
Befriending Hubs. Friends for Life Project. Age Connects Torfaen.	247 (January 2014)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 56% of beneficiaries aged 50-79 44% of beneficiaries aged 80+ 70% of beneficiaries were female, 30% male 67% of beneficiaries lived alone 57% of beneficiaries were widowed⁶³ 	Mainly group based activities delivered via six community hubs.
Gofal. British Red Cross.	1,688 individual	56% (target)	150 recruited	120% (target)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 74% of beneficiaries were female and 26% male⁶⁴ 	Mix of telephone support, one to one visits and peer group

⁶¹ Source: BAVO project RBA Report 31st October 2013 by WIHSC. Base of 31 beneficiaries for all percentages quoted.

⁶² Source: Monitoring information provided by the project to Old Bell 3 (April 2014). Base used for percentages unknown.

⁶³ Source: Friends for Life Befriending Evaluation RBA Report prepared by WIHSC (January 2014). Base of 247 beneficiaries for all percentages shown.

⁶⁴ Source: Evaluation of Gofal (North Wales) for British Red Cross (Interim Report). WIHSC. October 2014. Page 15.

	referrals (plus additional 401 repeat referrals) (October 2014)	of 3,000)	of which 69 remain active (October 2014)	of 125 volunte ers by month 18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 41% of beneficiaries aged between 50 and 79, with the average age being 78 years 50% of beneficiaries aged 80+ Age unknown for 9% of beneficiaries 88% of referrals were for one to one befriending⁶⁵ (this number includes repeat referrals) Most referrals (23%) came from Social Services Departments⁶⁶ 81% of referrals were responded to within five working days⁶⁷ The majority of referrals (53%) came from the Denbighshire area⁶⁸, but most of the actual service users were located in Conwy (33%)⁶⁹ 	<p>support provided.</p> <p>Average of 9 hours support provided per case. Time spent is higher per case for group peer support (at 12 hours per case)</p>
Moving on Befriending and Monitoring Scheme. Mental Health Matters Wales.	70 (April 2014)	35% (target 200)	75 (April 2014)	300% (target was 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% of beneficiaries involved in group activities 75% of beneficiaries involved in one to one befriending support 69% of beneficiaries are female, 31% are male 90% of beneficiaries are aged between 50-79 years 10% are aged 80+ 75 volunteers recruited of which 38 active in April 2014⁷⁰. 	<p>Mix of group based activities (e.g. coffee, breakfast and fishing groups) and one to one befriending support.</p> <p>On average 150 volunteer hours utilised per month.</p>
Community Links	164	55%	29	Unkno	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 beneficiaries (one to one befriending in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional one to one

⁶⁵ Ibid., Page 2

⁶⁶ Ibid., Page 6

⁶⁷ Source; Gofal Volunteer Befriending Support Service North Wales Report. January 2015. Page 2.

⁶⁸ Ibid., Page 5

⁶⁹ Source: Evaluation of Gofal (North Wales) for British Red Cross (Interim Report). WIHSC. October 2014. Page 15.

⁷⁰ Source: Monitoring information provided by the project to Old Bell 3 (April 2014).

Neath Port Talbot. Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services.	(April 2014)	(overall target to support 300 beneficiaries)	9April 2014)	wn	home), 22 (one to one befriending in care settings), 80 through the Big Sunday Lunch and 40 through the Dulais Valley Lunch club. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 84% of beneficiaries were women and 16% were men 29% of referrals (largest grouping) came from 'community organisations'. 17% of referrals (next largest grouping) came from social services teams. 36% of beneficiaries aged 50-79 64% of beneficiaries aged 80+ 75% of beneficiaries live in their own home 25% of beneficiaries live in nursing or residential care homes⁷¹ 	befriending service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short term volunteer befriender service to facilitate community engagement Activity based groups, such as lunch clubs and 'Furry Friends' (multi-generational dog walking club) 'Open' referral system accepting referrals from friends, family, neighbours, GPs and social services.
Friendly AdvantAGE Project. Vale Centre for Voluntary Services.	857 (April 2014)	95% (Target 900)	149 (April 2014)	149% (target of 100 by 31 Oct 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 52% of beneficiaries are aged 50-79 44% of beneficiaries are aged 80+⁷³ 68% of beneficiaries were women and 32% were men⁷⁴ 72% of beneficiaries have received home visits and have been assessed for suitability for one to one befriending 25% (the largest group) of beneficiaries self-referred themselves to the project. 13% (the second largest group) were referred to the project by a relative. Only 	60% of beneficiaries receive a visit of 2 hours per week ⁷² Mixture of one to one befriending and group activities. Activity under one of five sub-projects – Rural Connections, Let's Get Out, Long Term Befriending, Getting On With It and Disability Inclusion 481 home visits completed (as of April 2014)

⁷¹ Source: Monitoring information provided by the project to Old Bell 3 (April 2014). Percentages in this section all have a base of 44 beneficiaries.

⁷² Source: Monitoring information provided by the project to Old Bell 3 (April 2014). This is based on a sample of 15 beneficiaries.

⁷³ Source: Monitoring information provided by the project to Old Bell 3 (April 2014). Age data based on 262 beneficiaries. Age data unavailable for the remaining 4%.

⁷⁴ Source: Monitoring information provided by the project to Old Bell 3 (April 2014). Gender data based on 261 beneficiaries.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4% of beneficiaries were referred by social services⁷⁵. 105 volunteers recruited providing an average of 45 hours per volunteer. Estimated total volunteer inputs amount to 4,700 hours. 	8226 volunteer hours spent on project (as of April 2014), averaging at 55 hours per volunteer ⁷⁶ .
Meet Hear. Action on Hearing Loss.	295 (April 2014)	35% (overall target of 840)	19 (April 2014)	No volunteer target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 80% of beneficiaries were women and 20% men⁷⁷. Data on age groupings not routinely gathered (though system now in place to do this). Project estimates that 25% of beneficiaries are in the 50-79 age group and around 75% in the 80+ age group. No data on referral sources, but the project reported that they have not been actively receiving referrals from social services departments. No volunteer target set for this project but anticipated that 56 volunteers will have been recruited by the end of the project. 	Group based 'social befriending groups' only. 14 in total established. This project does not provide one to one befriending.
InTouch Project. Deafblind Cymru.	362 ⁷⁸ (February 2015)	302% (overall target of 120)	219 (of which 81 are active) (February 2015)	561% (target of 39)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% of the project's beneficiaries were women and 30% were men⁷⁹ Average age of beneficiaries 76 years 68% of the beneficiaries were aged 80+⁸⁰ with 42% of the total number of beneficiaries in the 81-90 age range Average of 71 visits per year (across all volunteers) 	<p>100% of beneficiaries accessing one-to-one befriending and support</p> <p>Average of 158 hours per month spent working with beneficiaries⁸⁵</p>

⁷⁵ Ibid. Base of 262 beneficiaries.

⁷⁶ Source: Word document detailing Friendly AdvantAGE overview, outcomes and monitoring data. Page 4.

⁷⁷ Source: Based on data supplied by the project from their end of year two report. Base number unknown.

⁷⁸ Some of these beneficiaries received support from the organisation's Head Office

⁷⁹ Source: External Evaluation of In Touch Wales Befriending Project. B. Peckford. (Feb 2015). Page 20. Base unknown.

⁸⁰ Source: Word document detailing project activity (2015). Page 2

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41% of referrals came from Social Services^{81 82} • 29% of project beneficiaries were located in Conwy, followed by Bridgend (14%) and Cardiff (13%)⁸³ • 50% of volunteers were in the 51-70 age range⁸⁴ 	17 deafblind awareness sessions delivered to representatives of 32 organisations ⁸⁶
Cadwyn Mon. Age Cymru, Gwynedd a Mon.	211 (October 2013)	42% (target of 500)	39 recruited of which 27 active at end of year 2. (October 2013)	39% (target of 100)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 77% of beneficiaries were men and 23% were women⁸⁷ • 68% of beneficiaries have a mobility limiting issue • 30% of beneficiaries suffer from depression • 38% of beneficiaries suffer from anxiety • 18% of beneficiaries suffer from memory loss • 15% are confined in their homes⁸⁸ 	Mix of 'matched' one to one befriending and group based activities including home based assessment visits.
Rural Friendships. PAVO.	182 (July 2014)	46% (target of 400)	94 (July 2014)	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average beneficiary age was 77 years, and over half the beneficiaries were aged 85+⁸⁹ • 69% of beneficiaries are female, and 31% are male⁹⁰ • 80% of beneficiaries reported having a chronic illness⁹¹ 	Based on one to one 'matched' befriending and group befriending activities which commenced in March 2014 Project estimates average inputs of 156 volunteering

⁸⁵ Source: Word document detailing project activity (2015). Page 1

⁸¹ Source: External Evaluation of In Touch Wales Befriending Project. B. Peckford. (Feb 2015). Page 18.

⁸² Base unknown

⁸³ Base unknown

⁸⁴ Base unknown

⁸⁶ Source: External Evaluation of In Touch Wales Befriending Project. B. Peckford. (Feb 2015). Page 21

⁸⁷ Source: End of Year 2 Report to BIG.

⁸⁸ Ibid. Based on 70 beneficiaries.

⁸⁹ Source: Rural Friendships End of Year Three Report. Pages 15-16.

⁹⁰ This is based on 113 beneficiaries who provided details of their gender, out of the total of 182 beneficiaries supported

⁹¹ Source: Rural Friendships End of Year Three Report. Page 16.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most referrals to the service were self-referrals (31%), followed by referrals made by Social Services (22%)⁹² • 64% of volunteers are female, and 26% are male (9% not specified) • 38% of volunteers were retired⁹³ • Most volunteers found out about the scheme from an existing volunteer (42%)⁹⁴ 	<p>hours per 'matched' befriending relationship.</p> <p>Project estimates an average of 21 staff hours per beneficiary.</p> <p>46 promotional events undertaken in year 3</p> <p>Average time taken to match a client with befriender is 68 days⁹⁵</p>
<p>Welcome Friends Project. CVS.</p>	<p>Proj. 1 – 592</p> <p>Proj. 2 – 718⁹⁶</p> <p>Total: 1310</p>	<p>109% (Total 1200)</p>	<p>Proj.1 - 51</p> <p>Proj.2 - 52</p> <p>Total: 103</p>	<p>Unkn wn</p>	<p>Monitoring information provided (covering both projects) shows that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% of beneficiaries are male • 74% of beneficiaries are female (1% not specified) • 22% of older volunteers are male • 77.4% of older volunteers are female (0.6% not specified)⁹⁷ 	<p>Project 1 - 489 people now engaged in group activities 51 older volunteers placed 14 people received one-to-one befriending 23 hubs established⁹⁸</p> <p>Project 2 – 367 people now engaged in group activities 52 older volunteers placed 27 people received one-to-one befriending</p>

⁹² Ibid., Page 22

⁹³ Ibid., Page 19

⁹⁴ Base 47

⁹⁵ Ibid., Page 24

⁹⁶ Source: Welcome Friends Third Annual Report 2014. Beth Johnson Foundation. 2014. Page 10.

⁹⁷ Source: Information provided to OB3 by project.

⁹⁸ Big Lottery Fund Project Update Form – Welcome Friends (South). 31st May 2014. Page 2.

					15 hubs established ⁹⁹	
Neighbourliness II. Age Connects Neath Port Talbot.	653 (March 2015)	93% (target 700)	40 (March 2015)	80% (target 50)	<p>Of the 139 beneficiaries surveyed in October 2013;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% were female, 25% were male • The majority of beneficiaries (19%) fell in the 80 to 84 age range, closely followed by the 75-79 age range (17%) • The majority of beneficiaries (55%) self-referred themselves to the project • The majority of beneficiaries (66%) were either single or widowed • The majority (98%) were of White British ethnicity <p>Further information provided indicated that the majority of the total number of beneficiaries (55%) participated in the 12-week activity model.</p> <p>Of the 15 volunteers surveyed in October 2013;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority (47%) were aged 65 to 74 years old. • 73% were female, 20% were male • 60% classed themselves as having a disability • 93% classed themselves as being of white ethnicity¹⁰⁰ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly social activities programme • Mixed social rehabilitation activities programme including:- trips, regular lunch outings, chair based exercise, craft sessions, increased social interaction, health promotion activities. • Volunteer Health Mentor support • 'Open' referral from health care professionals, family and independently. • Beneficiaries receive 5 hours of support per week. • Volunteers contributed 5,750 hours over the project lifetime

⁹⁹ Ibid., Page 2.

¹⁰⁰ Source: Promoting Independence Through Neighbourliness. February 2014. Pages 1 – 2.

TECHNICAL ANNEX 3

Evidence - Performance (Quality) – How well has it been done?

West Wales Befriending Links Project. Age Cymru Sir Gar.

Source/Methodology:

Qualitative case study approach adopted as part of September 2013 evaluation report. Involved observation, focus group with members and volunteers an individual interview with project co-ordinators and where possible individual interviews with a group member and/or volunteer. Three befriending groups were used as qualitative case studies.

A further 11 case studies were provided as a supplement to the evaluation report produced in October 2014, along with findings from semi-structured interviews with centre managers

Key findings include that:

- Groups which have a main activity as part of their remit will attract people who enjoy that activity, so the group is more secure in making decisions about what to do.
- Groups which meet weekly are likely to find deciding on activities harder, simply because they will need to generate more ideas than groups that meet monthly.
- The Activity group was the only mixed group included, and that may have had an impact on what they felt they could propose as activities.
- The groups all had the intention of being befriending groups, so activities need to be chosen that enable some social interaction, or sessions structured to give some time for getting to know each other.
- Attendance for all three groups seemed to be steady or growing, but the attitudes to growth were different in each case. There were challenges to growth with members liking a small close knit group but wanting to invite friends, or not wanting too many people at meetings as it made discussion harder.
- Activities need to be chosen that enable some social interaction, or sessions structured to give some time for getting to know each other.
- The ways in which people join groups is important in establishing the group dynamics.
- The venue is an important ingredient for any group – somewhere where the group is happy, comfortable and safe. One case study showed that mixing up the venue, using local hotels for a social event, can add some variety which is helpful.
- The project has, to some extent, ‘filled a gap’ in service provision, with the provision of a befriending service lessening and/or slowing down the need for elderly people to access support from social services.

Feedback was collected via membership renewal forms (362 forms completed¹⁰¹). 92% were happy with the activities provided, and 87% were happy with the practical arrangements. 3% reported a concern.

Other findings include that the befriending groups facilitated by the West Wales project provided:

- An activity that carers and cared for can share
- Respite for the carer – cared for person attends
- Respite for the carer – carer attends¹⁰²

Findings from interviews with centre managers held in October 2014 included;

- In terms of volunteers, project staff felt they had had a positive experience, and
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¹⁰¹ Source: Befriending Links Presentation, Age Cymru Sir Gar

¹⁰² Source: Evaluation of the West Wales Befriending Links (WWBL) Project: Evidence from Case Studies. WCVA. September 2013. Pages 5, 6 and 7.

received training not widely available in other projects. However, there is no feedback from volunteers available to confirm this. One centre did achieve the Investing in Volunteers Award while the project was on-going.

- The West Wales Befriending Links project was the first time the respective organisations in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion had worked together in partnership. It was felt this had gone generally well.
 - As the project was felt to be generally successful, it was felt this had led to a good reputation in both the voluntary and statutory sector and a high level of staff morale.
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The Rainbow Befriending Project. Penley Rainbow Centre

Source/Methodology:

Based on an two internal evaluations that included:

- Case studies of both 1-2-1 Befriending activity and group activity
- 2 x evaluation of social group activity during a one week period of the project, using questionnaires (one in 2013 and one in 2014)
- A focus group with Project Volunteers
- Group interviews with the Knit and Knatter and High Tea at Home groups
- Survey with referrers, which took the form of a Health Professional Survey, conducted at Overton on Dee Medical Practice
- Interviews with the project coordinators
- Qualitative interviews with project staff

Based on an external evaluation that included;

- Observation of a social group and follow-up questionnaire
 - Of the social group that was observed as part of the external evaluation, 100% of the beneficiaries surveyed (base 10) that the 'lunch and learn' activity was 'interesting to me'. 100% also thought the quality of the teaching was good and the quality of the food was good¹⁰³.
 - All beneficiaries¹⁰⁴ who visited the Rainbow Centre as part of the project during a one week period in November 2014 were asked to complete a questionnaire about their experience of the project. 100% of beneficiaries reported that the group activities they were attending were meeting their needs.
 - There is evidence to suggest that the larger group activities were not popular with some beneficiaries due to their size. The 'High Tea at Home' activity, where smaller groups of beneficiaries met at a host's home for afternoon tea once a month, were seen as more 'warm', 'safe' and 'friendly', and seemed to have successfully filled the gap in delivery¹⁰⁵. The activity has also attracted volunteers you wouldn't befriend but can volunteer on a sporadic basis.
 - 90% of volunteers surveyed (base 10) were either satisfied or very satisfied with the volunteering experience, and 70% thought the level of support and training given was either 'good' or 'excellent'¹⁰⁶.
 - Project staff interviewed as part of the End of Year 3 Report felt the clear pathway that allowed for the movement of 'many' people from one-to-one befriending activity to group activities was a particular success of the project, but this was not quantified in any way¹⁰⁷.
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¹⁰³ Source: Rainbow Befriending Project Evaluation Report. February 2013. Page 20.

¹⁰⁴ 47 beneficiaries in total

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., Page 17.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Page 23.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., Page 24.

Community Connections. The Bridges Community Centre.

Source/Methodology:

An external evaluator was appointed to evaluate the project and develop a monitoring and evaluation framework. This involved qualitative interviews with volunteers, service users, staff and other stakeholders, in addition to questionnaires and discussion groups. The Older Person's Outcomes Star was used as the main tool for measuring outcomes for service users.

Key findings from a volunteer perspective;

- The volunteers felt well-informed and supported.
- The volunteers understood their role, but felt that beneficiaries were often unclear about the role of the befriender. All volunteers were able to give examples of where they had been able to provide practical support, which was not their role¹⁰⁸.

Some volunteers felt that communication between the different parties and agencies involved could be improved. There had been instances where families were not always aware of beneficiaries participating in the scheme, and putting volunteers in uncomfortable situations¹⁰⁹.

Key findings from a beneficiary perspective;

- The group of four beneficiaries interviewed all said that the scheme had either met or exceeded their expectations.
- The beneficiaries were positive about the groups and activities provided by the centres¹¹⁰.

The project was awarded 'Approved Provider Standard' in July 2014 by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF), and its Safety Management Framework included in the MBF's Best Practice Guide¹¹¹.

GreengAGE. Gofal.

Source/Methodology:

Excel spreadsheet detailing project statistics.

End of Year Three Project Monitoring Form for Big Lottery Fund.

There was some positive feedback that suggested volunteers and staff members found that training provided as part of the project had been of a good standard¹¹².

Community Companions Project: BAVO

Source/Methodology:

¹⁰⁸ Source: Community Connections Befriending Scheme Evaluation Report. June 2013. Page 10.

¹⁰⁹ Source: Community Connections Befriending Scheme Evaluation Report. December 2014. Page 12.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. Page 12.

¹¹¹ Source: Bridges Community Centre Big Lottery Fund Project Monitoring Form – Year Three. Page 6.

¹¹² Source: Gofal Big Lottery Fund Project Monitoring Form – Year Three. Page 2.

An external evaluation undertaken by the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care, University of South Wales. The data used in the 2013 evaluation report was collected from volunteers across the community café and befriending projects via a paper questionnaire, and 31 were completed. The survey is due to be repeated each year across the project lifetime to provide longitudinal data. Qualitative evidence was collected by researchers through one to one interviews and group discussions during café visits, or through telephone interviews. A separate evaluation report was also produced for the volunteers involved in the project, with 33 volunteers having participated in a survey.

The data used in the 2014 evaluation report was collected from beneficiaries across the community café and befriending project via. paper questionnaire. It is based upon information from 31 completed baseline questionnaires and 112 follow-up questionnaires, and covers the period January 2013 to October 2014 inclusive. Qualitative evidence was collected by researchers through one to one interviews and group discussions during café visits during the period September 2014 to December 2014, or through one of five telephone interviews undertaken during November 2013. A separate evaluation report was also produced for the volunteers involved in the project, based on the findings from 31 completed questionnaires.

Key findings from volunteers;

- During the 2013 survey of volunteers, 30 out of 33 (91%) said they were very satisfied with their experience of the project, and all respondents said that they would recommend volunteering on the project to other people¹¹³.
- During the 2014 survey of volunteers, 28 out of 31 (93%) said they were 'very satisfied' with their experience of the project, and 100% of respondents said they would recommend volunteering on the project to other people¹¹⁴.
- BAVO has been awarded the Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard in September 2013¹¹⁵, demonstrating it has met required standards against nine quality indicators. Qualitative feedback provided by the volunteers indicated they found the training to be of a good standard and valuable to their work¹¹⁶.

Key findings from beneficiaries:

- The Initial Findings Report found that the community café 'seemed to be successful in connecting local people and both creating new and sustaining old friendships' though qualitative interviews¹¹⁷.
 - With regards to home befriending, the same report found that feedback from beneficiaries suggested that some had adopted 'successful facilitating roles'¹¹⁸ in either facilitating healthier lifestyles or greater community involvement. This was reiterated during the 2014 report.
 - Some beneficiaries highlighted the fact they had to wait up to several months to be matched with a volunteer.
-

Ffrindia: Mantell Gwynedd

¹¹³ Source; BAVO Community Companions Evaluation – Volunteer Survey Summary Report. December 2013. Page 2.

¹¹⁴ Source; BAVO Community Companions Evaluation – Volunteer Survey Summary Report. December 2014. Page 2.

¹¹⁵ Source: BAVO Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard Final Report. 2013.

¹¹⁶ Source: BAVO Community Champions Evaluation – Volunteer Survey Summary Report. WIHSC. Pages 3-4.

¹¹⁷ Source: BAVO Community Companions Evaluation – Beneficiaries Emerging Findings and Views. December 2013. Page 2.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., Page 5.

Source/Methodology:

Information provided by the project to Old Bell 3.

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- 98% of volunteers (from a base of 91 individuals) said that they were 'satisfied' with the project.
 - 80% of beneficiaries (from a base of 178 individuals) said that they thought the service provided by the project was 'good'.
 - In contrast somewhat, only 20% of beneficiaries (from a base of 178 individuals) said that they thought the service was 'relevant'.
 - Of 67 one to one befriending matches, only 4 (6%) had failed.
-

Befriending Hubs/Friends for Life: Age Connects Torfaen

Source/Methodology:

The project has appointed the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care, University of South Wales as an external evaluator for the project. Baseline data for project outcomes has been collected from an evaluation sample of 119 beneficiaries, and was followed up in 2014 – however, this latter information was not available at the time of writing this report. Qualitative data was also collected from a mixture of group interviews, telephone interviews, analysis of open text responses in the baseline questionnaires and analysis of diaries written by Community Hub members.

Key findings from beneficiaries:

- The 2014 qualitative summary report for the project stated Community Hub Members were 'overwhelmingly positive' about the project, and 'extremely complimentary' about the staff and volunteers¹¹⁹. These findings were reinforced by direct quotes from beneficiaries.
 - Baseline quantitative data that will help determine how well the project was delivered has been collected.
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Gofal: British Red Cross

Source/Methodology:

Word document detailing project outcomes, milestones and timescales, with wider project information including qualitative feedback, ten case studies and responses to a service monitoring questionnaire that are sent to beneficiaries once their case is complete. However, it was acknowledged that response rates for the questionnaire are low.

Interim Evaluation Report produced by WIHSC. The findings of the report are based on qualitative interviews (including 20 interviews with beneficiaries), an online bilingual volunteer survey, inferential statistics and an economic analysis.

Project report detailing outcomes

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- 85% of respondents to the service monitoring questionnaire rated their overall
-

¹¹⁹ 'Friends for Life' Befriending Project Evaluation Qualitative Summary Report. January 2014. Pages 3-4.

opinion of the service as either 'good' or 'excellent', and 88% would recommend the service to a friend¹²⁰. However, no indication is given as to how many beneficiaries returned the questionnaire.

- Qualitative feedback was provided from a number of beneficiaries that reflected how well they got on with their volunteer, and therefore how well-matched they were. Comments from beneficiaries included 'We got along famously' and that the befriender 'was very kind and helpful in every way'.¹²¹
 - In terms of volunteers, 87% were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with their experience of volunteering¹²².
 - Qualitative feedback also indicated that the volunteer training and support structures was thought of positively¹²³.
-

Moving on befriending and monitoring: Mental Health Matters Wales

Source/Methodology:

Report providing overview of project including outcomes and two qualitative case studies. Various documents providing beneficiary and volunteer feedback.

Feedback from social event.

Two examples of feedback from a social event were provided, which described the event as 'very good' and enjoyable'. However, this is a very small sample and no contextual information was provided for the feedback.

Community Links NPT: Neath Port Talbot CVS

Source/Methodology:

- Word document detailing project data and case studies
 - Word documents detailing feedback from two lunch clubs, captured via questionnaires
 - Word document detailing project milestones and outputs.
 - Word document detailing qualitative feedback from one to one interviews with beneficiaries (base unknown)
 - Word document detailing survey results from Big Sunday Lunch event
 - Word document detailing survey results from evaluation event
 - Word document detailing qualitative feedback from two focus group sessions with care home residents
-

- 95% of beneficiaries interviewed were either very satisfied or satisfied with the service provided by the project¹²⁴.
 - 87.5% of the beneficiaries interviewed were satisfied with the volunteer they were matched with¹²⁵.
 - The lunch clubs were also well liked. In 2013, questionnaires were circulated at three
-

¹²⁰ Source: Meta Evaluation Gofal Befriending Service Document (Date unknown). Page 8.

¹²¹ Ibid., Pages 8-9

¹²² Base 21

¹²³ Source: Interim Report – Gofal (North Wales). WIHSC. October 2014. Page 15.

¹²⁴ Base 60

¹²⁵ Source: Community Links project overview document. Page 2.

separate Big Sunday Lunch Events, and on average 99% of beneficiaries said they enjoyed the event and felt they had benefitted from attending¹²⁶. 100% of beneficiaries at the Dulais Valley Lunch Club said they enjoyed attending the club¹²⁷. In 2014, 54 people were surveyed at one Big Sunday Lunch Event. 96% said they had enjoyed the day and 98% said they would attend again¹²⁸.

Friendly AdvantAGE: VCVS

Source/Methodology:

The project commissioned an external evaluator – The Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care, based at the University of South Wales – to oversee the evaluation of the project. As well as qualitative reports covering a number of the sub-projects, four quantitative reports showing trends over a period of twelve months were produced. Several case studies were also provided.

- Overall, 94% of beneficiaries would use the service again, and 91% would recommend the service to others¹²⁹. These figures are based on a sample of 66.
 - In the 2013 and 2014 RBA Reports, both 95% of volunteers involved would recommend volunteering on the project to others.¹³⁰¹³¹
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Meet Hear: Action on Hearing Loss

Source/Methodology:

Document detailing current evaluation activity to date, project application, and service user questionnaire.

No information available.

In Touch: Deafblind Cymru

Source/Methodology:

An evaluation report based on in-depth interviews with seven beneficiaries and data analysed thematically. The evaluation report was produced in 2013, and a short follow-up report was produced in 2014. This included results from multiple questionnaires completed by beneficiaries over the space of 12 months.

An independent external evaluation report produced in February 2015, based on a desk-based evidence review and interviews with project staff, beneficiaries, volunteers and key stakeholders.

Based on a sample of 32 beneficiaries in 2014;

- 100% of beneficiaries were either very satisfied or quite satisfied with the service they
-

¹²⁶ Base 169

¹²⁷ Base 33.

¹²⁸ Source; Word document detailing feedback from The Big Sunday Lunch in 2014.

¹²⁹ Source: Friendly AdvantAGE Third RBA Report. December 2013. Page 3.

¹³⁰ Ibid., Page 4.

¹³¹ Source: Friendly AdvantAGE Fourth RBA Report. WIHSC. April 2014. Page 5.

received from the project.

- 100% of beneficiaries also said they were either very satisfied or quite satisfied with both the service meeting their needs, and the support provided by the volunteers.¹³²

In the final evaluation report produced in February 2015, there was some evidence to suggest that the referral process between social services sensory impairment teams and the project worked well and was responsible for the project greatly exceeding its beneficiary target numbers. However, this was not the case for other specialist services such as Eye, Low Vision and Audiology clinics.

Qualitative feedback provided on the deafblind awareness sessions was very positive, with comments such as '[the] content was excellent and supplemented very well with the practical aspects'¹³³.

Cadwyn Môn: Age Cymru Gwynedd a Môn

Source/Methodology:

End of Second year Report to BIG.

No information on 'how well' provided. Some information on impacts and outcomes provided and noted below.

Rural Friendships: PAVO

Source/Methodology:

Four case studies, report detailing outcomes over project lifetime, spreadsheet with basic project data.

External End of Year Three Evaluation Report (January 2014), with findings based on client referral forms, volunteer application forms, Older Persons Outcome Star Assessments, satisfaction survey results, befriending agreements, focus groups, case studies and telephone interviews (numbers not specified).

The feedback from the volunteer stated the training had been 'excellent' and the participants 'carefully matched'.

Welcome Friends: CVS

Source/Methodology:

Year 1, 2 and 3 Evaluation Reports¹³⁴

The project has adopted CASP 19 – a measure of quality of life in old age which used 19 Likert Scale items and deployed this with a sample of 169 newly engaged beneficiaries in year three of the project. Follow-up questionnaires will be deployed in Year Five of the project.

The 2013 report recognised the strong emphasis the project places on the individual and

¹³² Source: Deafblind Cymru In Touch Project Summary Report (2014). Pages 6-7.

¹³³ Source: External Evaluation of In Touch Wales Befriending Project. B. Peckford. (Feb 2015). Page 21 - 22

¹³⁴ The Beth Johnson Foundation was commissioned as the project's external evaluators.

determining their needs with regards to the project. The report stated 'many participants' spoke 'very highly' of the staff coordinators working on the project, and the time and effort they had invested in the beneficiaries¹³⁵.

Beneficiaries were also able to provide feedback and offer improvements on ways the project could be improved. Several beneficiaries suggested the project could be more effectively promoted, perhaps lessening the focus on loneliness and isolation, as potential participants may be too proud to admit feeling lonely¹³⁶.

Neighbourliness II. Neath Port Talbot Age Connects.

Source/Methodology:

Promoting Independence Through Neighbourliness Data Report. February 2014.
Emergent Themes and Views Initial Report. February 2013.

- 99% of the beneficiaries' surveyed (base 139) in 2014 would recommend the service to others, and 99% would also use the service again. 97% of the volunteers also rated 'the volunteers that I got to know' as either 'very good' or 'fairly good'¹³⁷.
 - 100% of the volunteers surveyed (base 15) in 2014 would use the service again, and 100% also said they were either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with the overall volunteering experience¹³⁸.
 - Qualitative feedback collected at a social event in December 2012 indicates that some beneficiaries thought that a particular volunteer they knew (the driver that collected them for their social club weekly) was 'brilliant' and 'very patient'¹³⁹.
-

¹³⁵ Source: Welcome Friends Second Annual Report. 2013. Page 7.

¹³⁶ Source: Welcome Friends Third Annual Report. 2014. Page 8.

¹³⁷ Source: Promoting Independence Through Neighbourliness Data Report. February 2014. Page 3.

¹³⁸ Ibid., Page 3.

¹³⁹ Source: Emergent Themes and Views Initial Report. Page 2.

TECHNICAL ANNEX 4

Evidence - Effect – What difference has it made?

West Wales Befriending Links Project. Age Cymru Sir Gar.

Source/Methodology:

Qualitative case study approach adopted as part of September 2013 evaluation report. Involved observation, focus group with members and volunteers an individual interview with project co-ordinators and where possible individual interviews with a group member and/or volunteer. Three groups were used as case studies.

A further 11 case studies were provided as a supplement to the evaluation report produced in October 2014, along with findings from semi-structured interviews with centre managers.

Key findings include that:

- 75% of people who completed a membership renewal form (base 362) said the friendship group they attended was making a difference¹⁴⁰.
- All groups are dependent on the continued interest of those who attend and two of the case study groups had experienced some difficulty in this area.
- One group showed some difficulty in generating ideas for activities for the future, so was vulnerable to running out of fresh ideas.
- Some evidence to suggest impacts relating to 'social inclusion and growth in self-esteem'.
- Some evidence of 'a range of impacts that went beyond the group context. Members were encouraged to form other groups to do more of the activity, or met at other times to develop the friendships or offer support'.
- The size of a group is very important to its perceived value by participating beneficiaries.
- All three groups were operating on a 'current account' basis – i.e. they aimed to meet their costs and to survive from one meeting to the next.
- There is evidence to suggest effective partnership working with relevant organisations, especially local Social Services, and effective signposting of services (both internal and external).
- Some evidence of positive impacts on health – both as part of the project, and as a side effect of the project (beneficiaries arranging to do additional activities with friends they had met through the project).

The Rainbow Befriending Project. Penley Rainbow Centre

Source/Methodology:

Based on internal evaluations that included:

- Case studies of both 1-2-1 Befriending activity and group activity
- 2 x evaluation of social group activity during a one week period of the project, using questionnaires (one in 2013 and one in 2014)
- A focus group with Project Volunteers
- Group interviews with the Knit and Knatter and High Tea at Home groups
- Survey with referrers, which took the form of a Health Professional Survey, conducted at Overton on Dee Medical Practice
- Interviews with the project coordinators
- Qualitative interviews with project staff

¹⁴⁰ Source: West Wales Befriending Links Annual Report Presentation, Age Cymru Sir Gar, Sept. 2014

Based on an external evaluation that included;

- Qualitative interviews with three beneficiaries involved in the one-to-one befriending scheme

Key findings from a beneficiary perspective:

- 88% (or 21 beneficiaries from a sample base of 24) said that they now had something to look forward to.
- 86% (or 19 beneficiaries from a sample base of 22) said that they felt more involved in their local community.
- 75% (or 18 beneficiaries from a sample base of 24) said that they had made new friends and developed stronger support networks.
- 56% saw an improvement in their physical health (No base number provided)
- 50% said that they had more energy for everyday life (No base number provided)¹⁴¹
- A general (qualitative) view that the nine month limit for the one to one befriending period needed to be more flexible.
- Qualitative feedback from beneficiaries involved in the one-to-one befriending scheme indicated visits reduced feelings of isolation and loneliness for the beneficiaries – ‘it’s provided me with someone to talk to and a link to the outside world’¹⁴².
- There were also instances of where increased confidence gained through the befriending relationship had enabled beneficiaries to join other groups and clubs¹⁴³.
- Of the 10 volunteers interviewed following the observation of a ‘lunch and learn’ session, 100% agreed that through joining the group they had developed new friendships, support networks and contacts they could rely on. They also all agreed they felt more involved in their local community and their sense of something to look forward to had increased¹⁴⁴.
- All beneficiaries¹⁴⁵ who visited the Rainbow Centre as part of the project during a one week period in November 2014 were asked to complete a questionnaire about their experience. 86% felt more involved in their local community as a result of attending the social group activities, and the majority had also seen a reduction in their feelings of loneliness and the development of stronger support networks. Improvements in physical health were also reported by 56% of beneficiaries surveyed¹⁴⁶.
- The support network provided by established activity-based groups gave beneficiaries the confidence to try new projects they previously wouldn’t have attempted¹⁴⁷.

Key findings from a volunteer perspective (based on a focus group):

- Volunteers see the one to one befriending service as an ‘enabler, facilitating the most isolated to become even more involved in their community’.
 - The main motivation for volunteers was a ‘common desire to help people in the local community’.
 - Volunteers value the support, training and handbook that they receive. This helped them clearly understand their role. Volunteers also said that they were clear about what to do if they had a problem or needed extra support.
 - Volunteers said that they would value information and training on specific disability
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¹⁴¹ Source; Rainbow Befriending Project: End of Year 2 Evaluation Report. (Undated). All data quoted from page 12 of the report.

¹⁴² Source: Rainbow Befriending Project Evaluation Report. February 2013. Page 13.

¹⁴³ Ibid., Page 14

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., Page 20.

¹⁴⁵ 47 beneficiaries in total

¹⁴⁶ Source: Rainbow Befriending Project: End of Year 3 Evaluation Report. (Undated) Page 11.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., Pages 14-15

- and illness issues prior to the first visit (specifically stroke recovery and depression).
- Volunteers felt that they were able to draw effectively on local knowledge and personal skills to work with beneficiaries.
- Specific outcomes from a volunteer perspective included a sense of 'doing something worthwhile' and 'giving something back' to the local community.
- Some volunteers feel pressured to 'end the relationship' at the end of the nine month period.
- Volunteers felt that promoting the project/service to potential beneficiaries was problematic due to the rural nature of the area covered by the project and pride (i.e. people not wanting to come forward for support)¹⁴⁸.
- Volunteers surveyed also had several suggestions for improvement – namely improved contact during the early stages after joining, specific training to deal with difficult situations and the need for a designated contact during specific times e.g. Christmas¹⁴⁹.

Local service providers (based on a survey of health professionals at a medical practice):

- Despite general awareness of the project, little specific awareness of the range of services offered, how to make a referral or how to promote the service to patients.
- Health professionals requested additional information (e.g. information leaflets, referral guidance and briefings at staff meetings to enhance their knowledge).

Key conclusions from the external evaluation report included that:

- The befriending service was impacting positively on older people's quality of life.
- The scheme is offering a service that is assisting older people to reduce levels of loneliness and social isolation by providing people with a 'link to the outside world', building their confidence and supporting them to participate in new relationships and wider group activity.
- The service has been perceived as different from other statutory and voluntary services.
- Involvement in the project had impacted positively on beneficiaries – personally, socially and in terms of their overall health and wellbeing.
- Participants in one to one befriending have benefitted from a link to the community and has helped them develop skills, build confidence and self-esteem to make new friends.
- Volunteer support has been a key element in generating positive outcomes and volunteers themselves feel that they are making (via the project) a positive contribution to their local community.

Community Connections. The Bridges Community Centre.

Source/Methodology:

An external evaluator was appointed to evaluate the scheme and develop a monitoring and evaluation framework. This involved qualitative interviews with volunteers, service users, staff and other stakeholders, in addition to questionnaires and discussion groups. The Older Person's Outcomes Star was used as the main tool for measuring outcomes for service users.

Key findings from volunteers (interviewed as a group):

- Volunteers said they felt they had helped their befriendees by 'just being there'.
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¹⁴⁸ Source: Rainbow Befriending Project Evaluation Report. February 2013. Pages 14 and 15.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., Page 24.

- They were also aware that they couldn't always bring about significant changes in a beneficiary's life, and the changes they did make were often small or subtle.
- Befrienders spent time building up relationships with the befriendees which put them in a good position to act on an individual's behalf when necessary. An example was given of a volunteer who had been able to intervene on behalf of a lady who needed treatment from a GP by contacting her daughter¹⁵⁰. This was highlighted as an example of the early intervention role that befriending can play in terms of preventing problems further down the line.

Key findings from beneficiaries (interviewed as group):

- The group were able to provide qualitative feedback on the differences made by the scheme. These were; enabling them to get their own help, preventing them losing their own independence, providing them with practical support, taking them out for walks and trips, providing someone to talk to and help with reading.
- Further qualitative information was gathered from beneficiaries in 2014 in pairs and/or small groups at an afternoon tea event. There was some evidence to suggest that the project had helped to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation for them, and the accompanying mental health issues such situations could bring, such as depression and stress¹⁵¹.

Key findings from project co-ordinators:

- Improved mood and well-being due to increased mobility was identified as a key difference made to beneficiaries based on beneficiary feedback.

Key findings from stakeholders;

- A local Housing Association that provides sheltered accommodation for older people felt befriending relieved pressure on over-stretched staff as well as visiting older people. However, the project had yet to prove if it aided tenancy sustainment.
 - A local Health and Social Care Facility were provided feedback from individuals who had been referred to the befriending service by them including two individuals who had said they felt more integrated into the community and were spending more time with their families.¹⁵²
 - Feedback from a manager in the Local Authority's social services team indicated that there had been a reduction in the number of referrals to the team, but that was not quantified in any manner¹⁵³. It was felt that social workers were focusing people to more appropriate personalised support services.
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GreengAGE. Gofal.

Source/Methodology:

Excel spreadsheet detailing project statistics.

End of Year Three Project Monitoring Form for BIG Lottery Fund

- 100% of the beneficiaries of one-to-one befriending within their own homes¹⁵⁴ in 2014 enjoyed their sessions and felt it reduced isolation for them.
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¹⁵⁰ Source: Community Connections Befriending Scheme Evaluation Report. June 2013. Page 11.

¹⁵¹ Source: Community Connections Befriending Scheme Evaluation Report. December 2014. Page 12.

¹⁵² Source; Community Connections Befriending Scheme Evaluation Report. June 2013. Page 14

¹⁵³ Ibid., page 15

¹⁵⁴ Base 24

- 100% of the beneficiaries of group befriending also said they enjoyed their sessions and they reduced isolation.
- 87% of beneficiaries participating in the one to one befriending said that their well-being had improved. 92% of beneficiaries participating in group befriending said that their well-being had been improved.
- 33% of beneficiaries participating in the one to one befriending said that their physical health had improved. The same was true for those participating in group befriending.
- 87% of beneficiaries participating in the one to one befriending said that their confidence had increased. 50% of beneficiaries participating in group befriending said that their confidence had increased.
- 93% of beneficiaries participating in the one to one befriending said that the support had led to a positive impact on their 'internal/external environment'. The same was true for 67% of those participating in group befriending activities.

Unless, otherwise stated, no sample base was provided for these statistics. We do not have information as to how these statistics were gathered.

Limited qualitative evidence suggests the project has increased confidence levels in both beneficiaries and volunteers.

Community Companions Project: BAVO

Source/Methodology:

An external evaluation has been undertaken by the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care, University of South Wales. The data used in the evaluation report were collected from volunteers across the community café and befriending projects via a paper questionnaire. 31 beneficiary questionnaires were completed in total. The survey is due to be repeated each year across the project lifetime to provide longitudinal data. Qualitative data was also collected by researchers through one to one interviews and group discussions during café visits, or through telephone interviews. A separate evaluation report was also produced for the volunteers involved in the project. 33 volunteers in total responded to the survey.

The data used in the 2014 evaluation report was collected from beneficiaries across the community café and befriending project via. paper questionnaire. It is based upon information from 31 completed baseline questionnaires and 112 follow-up questionnaires, and covers the period January 2013 to October 2014 inclusive. Qualitative evidence was collected by researchers through one to one interviews and group discussions during café visits during the period September 2014 to December 2014, or through one of five telephone interviews undertaken during November 2013. A separate evaluation report was also produced for the volunteers involved in the project, based on the findings from 31 completed questionnaires.

Key findings from beneficiaries :

- During qualitative interviews conducted during the period May to October 14 90% of respondents¹⁵⁵ 'strongly agreed' or 'tended to agree' that the café and/or befriending support had increased their opportunities to socialise and mix with others. Respondents also agreed that the support had improved their self-confidence, helped them feel less anxious, and made them feel more involved in their local community¹⁵⁶.
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¹⁵⁵ Base 100

¹⁵⁶ Source; BAVO Community Companions Evaluation Second RBA Report, October 2014. Page 5.

- During qualitative interviews, several beneficiaries¹⁵⁷ stated they felt the café had ‘increased neighbourliness’ in their local area¹⁵⁸, and initiated wider interactions between beneficiaries outside the befriending network.
- Several beneficiaries also felt the cafes had a direct impact on improving their mental well-being, with more than one beneficiary saying they no longer felt suicidal.¹⁵⁹
- Several beneficiaries felt the cafes provided a friendship group and support network to them¹⁶⁰. This was particularly the case for the Mental Health Matters Café, and for beneficiaries who carried out caring roles for their spouses.
- With regards to the home befriending beneficiaries¹⁶¹, the qualitative feedback was ‘overwhelmingly positive’, with beneficiaries saying ‘[it’s] the best thing I’ve ever done’ and ‘I am so much happier’¹⁶².

Key findings from volunteers:

- The 2013 survey identified that the biggest impact the project had on volunteers was an increase in personal development, such as confidence and self-esteem, and participation in local activities, which both had either ‘increased’ or ‘increased greatly’ for 63% of respondents¹⁶³¹⁶⁴. The 2014 survey identified that still the biggest impact the project had on volunteers was an increase in personal development, such as confidence and self-esteem, which had ‘increased’ or ‘increased greatly’ for 83% of respondents¹⁶⁵¹⁶⁶.
- Volunteers reported improvements in skills, general health and well-being, employability, access to new contacts and networks and a sense of trust in others.
- All volunteers reported positive increases in the impact areas surveyed, bar one respondent who reported that their sense of trust in others had decreased.

Frindia: Mantell Gwynedd

Source/Methodology:

Information provided by the project to Old Bell 3.

- 15% (from a base of 178 beneficiaries) are now taking part in community activities.
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Befriending Hubs/Friends for Life: Age Connects Torfaen

Source/Methodology:

The project has appointed the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care, University of South

¹⁵⁷ Base 31

¹⁵⁸ Source: BAVO Community Companions Evaluation – Beneficiaries Emerging Findings and Views. December 2013. Page 2.

¹⁵⁹ Source: BAVO Community Companions Evaluation – Beneficiaries Emerging Findings and Views. December 2014. Pages 3-4.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., Page 3.

¹⁶¹ Base 5

¹⁶² Ibid., Page 4.

¹⁶³ Source: BAVO Community Companions Evaluation – Volunteer Survey Summary Report. December 2013. Page 2.

¹⁶⁴ Base 33

¹⁶⁵ Source: BAVO Community Companions Evaluation – Volunteer Survey Summary Report. December 2014. Page 2.

¹⁶⁶ Base31

Wales as an external evaluator for the project. Baseline data for project outcomes has been collected from an evaluation sample of 119 beneficiaries, and was followed up in 2014 – however, this latter information was not available at the time of writing this report. Qualitative data was also collected from a mixture of group interviews, telephone interviews, analysis of open text responses in the baseline questionnaires and analysis of diaries written by Community Hub members.

Key findings from a beneficiary perspective:

- During the qualitative research, beneficiaries said the Community Hubs had helped to reduce their feelings of loneliness. They also felt they had better support networks as a result of developing connections and building new friendships while at the Hub¹⁶⁷. The support networks also acted as sources of information for members.
 - The research also found the Hubs ‘appeared to promote more active lifestyles’¹⁶⁸, both physically and mentally.
 - Some beneficiaries felt that the Community Hubs had helped to increase their confidence and general mental well-being¹⁶⁹.
 - The longer term members of the Community Hubs developed ‘a sense of ownership and belonging within the Hub’¹⁷⁰.
 - Several beneficiaries did not report significant positive impacts, and the report suggested that this meant some beneficiaries benefited from the Community Hubs more than others. One beneficiary stated ‘It’s made a good difference, but not a huge difference’¹⁷¹.
 - The initial qualitative summary predominantly focused on the Community Hubs, but three telephone interviews were conducted with home beneficiaries. However, two of the beneficiaries interviewed were in the early stages of their support programme, and it may have been too early to truly assess the impact of the befriending project on them. From the point of view of the evaluator, the feedback from the home befriending beneficiaries was ‘extremely powerful’ and ‘[demonstrated] that it is those in the most isolating circumstances who can potentially benefit the most’¹⁷².
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Gofal: British Red Cross

Source/Methodology:

Word document detailing project outcomes, milestones and timescales, with wider project information including qualitative feedback, ten case studies and responses to a service monitoring questionnaire that are sent to beneficiaries once their case is complete. However, it was acknowledged that response rates for the questionnaire are low.

Interim Evaluation Report produced by WIHSC. The findings of the report are based on qualitative interviews (including 20 interviews with beneficiaries), an online bilingual volunteer survey (base 24), inferential statistics and an economic analysis.

Project report detailing outcomes

- Beneficiaries were asked to provide initial and final values in the form of a ‘yes/no’ response in respect of their needs being met in relation to nine variables listed under
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¹⁶⁷ Friends for Life Befriending Project Evaluation Qualitative Summary Report. January 2014. Pages 5 – 6.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., Page 6.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., Page 7.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., Page 7.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., Page 7.

¹⁷² Ibid., Page 8.

a Map of Social Contacts. The greatest change was seen in the number of beneficiaries feeling their emotional needs were being met, with 483 changing from answering 'no' at the initial assessment to 'yes' at the final assessment. Positive changes were reported across all nine variables, with significant positive changes being reported with regards to access to clubs and organisations, access to information and access to transport¹⁷³. Further statistical analysis carried out by independent evaluators suggests the variables of age and gender had no impact on these changes.

- Beneficiaries¹⁷⁴ were also asked to rate on a change wheel, using a scale of 1 to 10, to what extent they felt certain of their needs were being met. This assessment was again made at both an initial and final stage. All variables saw an improvement in their median outcomes, with the average change being +3. By the end of their involvement beneficiaries felt safe and secure as a result of the project (final median score 10) and felt they could look after themselves (final median score 8)¹⁷⁵. Some beneficiaries recorded a movement of +8 in respect of some variables¹⁷⁶.
 - In terms of numbers of beneficiaries¹⁷⁷ citing improvement, most people (417) stated an improvement in their emotional health as a result of the project, followed closely by a reduction in feelings of loneliness (413) and increased motivation (412). Further statistical analysis carried out by independent evaluators suggests the variables of age and gender had no influence upon these changes.
 - In terms of qualitative feedback, evidence suggests beneficiaries experienced reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation and increased confidence¹⁷⁸.
 - It was interesting to note that the qualitative feedback indicated that approximately half the beneficiaries interviewed¹⁷⁹ felt that their involvement in the project had had no long term impacts on them. These comments seem to have mostly come from beneficiaries in receipt of the one-to-one befriending service which was time limited. Several beneficiaries felt 'it [the support] was too short', with comments made such as '...I wish it hadn't stopped and if it was available again I'd take it'¹⁸⁰.
 - Data collected from volunteers¹⁸¹ indicated that the majority of them (83%) felt that their access to new contacts and networks had 'increased' or 'increased greatly' as a result of participation in the project, and 71% felt they had seen positive changes in their confidence and self-esteem¹⁸². These findings were supported by qualitative feedback also collected from the volunteers.
-

Moving on befriending and monitoring: Mental Health Matters Wales

Source/Methodology:

Report providing overview of project including outcomes and two qualitative case studies.
Various documents providing beneficiary and volunteer feedback.

- No quantitative evidence was provided, but evidence from the case studies suggested beneficiaries felt more confident and less isolated. The beneficiaries in both case studies provided then went on to become volunteers themselves, with one
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¹⁷³ Source: Evaluation of Gofal (North Wales) Interim Report for British Red Cross. October 2014. Page 16.

¹⁷⁴ Base 427

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., Page 19

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., Page 20

¹⁷⁷ Base 427

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. Page 7.

¹⁷⁹ Base 20

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., Page 7

¹⁸¹ Base 24

¹⁸² Ibid. Page 11.

saying 'Volunteering gives my life a sense of purpose and a feeling of being useful...'

Community Links NPT: Neath Port Talbot CVS

Source/Methodology:

- Word document detailing project data and case studies
 - Word documents detailing feedback from two lunch clubs, captured via questionnaires
 - Word document detailing project milestones and outputs.
 - Word document detailing qualitative feedback from one to one interviews with beneficiaries (base unknown)
 - Word document detailing survey results from Big Sunday Lunch event
 - Word document detailing survey results from evaluation event
 - Word document detailing qualitative feedback from two focus group sessions with care home residents
-

- 100% of beneficiaries interviewed said they were benefiting in some way from being involved in the project.¹⁸³ Qualitative feedback indicated these benefits included increased confidence, a support network and a reduction in the feelings of isolation.
 - 98% of beneficiaries also said their social interaction had increased¹⁸⁴.
 - 100% of beneficiaries also said they felt the project had helped to improve their quality of life.¹⁸⁵ All beneficiaries surveyed also felt more confident and motivated as a result of the project¹⁸⁶.
 - Volunteers from the project have been regularly visiting two local care homes. Original referrals were for individuals at the home, but it was found to be more beneficial if the volunteers talked with any people who wished to engage while they were there. The managers of the care home were very satisfied with the project and volunteers, and felt that residents had enjoyed and benefited from the project through social contact with new people.¹⁸⁷ Qualitative feedback from focus groups with residents held at the care homes during the last quarter of 2014 seemed to be very positive.
 - There were interesting comments from an older volunteer, who said that taking part in the project was helping to alleviate his own feelings of isolation and loneliness.
 - Feedback was also sought from the relatives of beneficiaries. The feedback supplied was positive, but there are no details on how many relatives were approached to provide feedback.
 - 100% of beneficiaries attending a Dulais Valley Lunch Club event felt their social interaction had increased, and they had received a positive boost to their emotional health and wellbeing¹⁸⁸.
 - Over three Big Sunday Lunch Club events, an average of 93% of beneficiaries felt that the event had given them confidence to attend future activities.¹⁸⁹
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¹⁸³ Base 15

¹⁸⁴ Base 60

¹⁸⁵ Source: Word document detailing findings from Community Links Evaluation Event held on 31/10/14. Page 2.

¹⁸⁶ Base 60.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., page 6.

¹⁸⁸ Base 33

¹⁸⁹ Base 169

Friendly AdvantAGE: VCVS

Source/Methodology:

The project commissioned an external evaluator – The Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care, based at the University of South Wales – to oversee the evaluation of the project. As well as qualitative reports covering a number of the sub-projects, four quantitative reports showing trends over a period of twelve months were produced. Several case studies were also provided.

- Beneficiaries were asked to rate how they felt with regards to up to 12 potential impacts at three points of their involvement with the project – Baseline (before support), Case Closed (at end of support) and during a Follow Up. Scores were calculated by allocating a numerical value to respondent's answers, with the larger the number indicating the greater magnitude of change. Overall, beneficiaries saw a +0.3 positive change across various areas from baseline stage to case closed stage, and a +0.4 positive change from baseline stage to follow-up stage¹⁹⁰.
 - Overall, beneficiaries had seen the most positive changes to their feelings about getting older (+0.9) and an increase in both the opportunities to socialise and do things that they enjoy (both +0.7) (from baseline to follow-up).
 - Overall, from baseline to follow-up stage, there was no change in people's confidence in meeting new people. There was also an overall decrease in them feeling stimulated and challenged (-0.4).
 - It is interesting to note that, with regards to the Rural Connections sub-project, there was an overall negative change of -0.1 from baseline to case closed stage. Yet, from baseline to follow up stage the overall change was calculated at +0.2, indicating that that the effects of this particular intervention take longer to materialise than others.
 - All sub-projects had measured positive changes to beneficiaries from baseline to follow-up stage (in the case of Getting On With It, data was only available from baseline to case closed stage, but this too indicated positive change), with the exception being Long Term Befriending. The data gathered indicates an overall negative change of -0.4 from baseline to follow-up stage. Beneficiaries actually felt lonely more often than they used to (-2.1) and less able to maintain a sense of independence (-1.1). These negative impacts were generally measured from case closed to follow-up stage, indicating that any positive impacts brought about as a result of the intervention were not long-lasting¹⁹¹.
 - The first qualitative evaluation report 'I feel as if I am living in the world again' provided evidence that the projects had improved the confidence of beneficiaries and this in turn impacted on them regaining their independence in many circumstances. This evidence was compiled from interviews with seven beneficiaries from across three of the sub-projects.
 - The report also stated that volunteers had undertaken 'successful facilitating roles' which had enabled beneficiaries to adopt healthier lifestyles, by giving up smoking for example, and take up new opportunities, such as using computers as part of the Getting on with IT project¹⁹². They also enabled beneficiaries to continue with everyday tasks, such as food shopping.
 - An individual qualitative report was produced for the Rural Connections Project, in which 26 beneficiaries were surveyed. As well as recognising the project played a role in reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation, it suggested that people in rural
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¹⁹⁰ Source: Friendly AdvantAGE Fourth RBA Report V1.1. WIHSC. April 2014. Page 6.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., Page 7.

¹⁹² Source; 'I feel as if I am living in the world again' Initial Report. December 2013. Pages 2-3.

areas were appreciative of such a project, with one beneficiary saying 'rural areas are often neglected'¹⁹³.

- The Rural Connections project was also found to have provided beneficiaries with a local support network, and gave them a sense of living in a more resilient community.
 - In terms of volunteers, of the volunteers surveyed in the six month period up to April 2014, 60% felt their access to new contacts had either 'increased greatly' or 'greatly' as a result of the project. They had also seen improvements in their personal development¹⁹⁴
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Meet Hear: Action on Hearing Loss

Source/Methodology:

Document detailing current evaluation activity to date, project application, service user questionnaire, PowerPoint presentation.

No data is currently available on what difference the project is making – anecdotal quotes from service users in a PowerPoint Presentation were largely positive.

In Touch: Deafblind Cymru

Source/Methodology:

An evaluation report based on in-depth interviews with seven beneficiaries and data analysed thematically. The evaluation report was produced in 2013, and a short follow-up report was produced in 2014. This included results from multiple questionnaires completed by beneficiaries over the space of 12 months.

An independent external evaluation report produced in February 2015, based on a desk-based evidence review and interviews with project staff, beneficiaries, volunteers and key stakeholders.

The 2013 evaluation report identified important positive changes made by the project, and categorized them into two subthemes:

- Health changes – such as giving up smoking with help from their volunteer, and losing weight and keeping active by completing an exercise plan during their befriending time.
- Improvements in mental health – especially an elevation in mood and positive feelings such as self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth. One beneficiary said 'I'm in a better mood than I have been in a very, very long time'. Another stated their volunteer had helped re-build their confidence and this in turn had made him more independent.¹⁹⁵

The 2015 evaluation report categorized the positive changes made by the project into two different sub-themes;

- Practical benefits - suggesting practical solutions to problems in the form of aids and equipment, helping with communication tasks such as reading, helping them attend appointments etc.
 - Social benefits – meeting and being with other people
-

¹⁹³ Ibid., Page 4.

¹⁹⁴ Source: Friendly AdvantAGE Fourth RBA Report V1.1 WIHSC. April 2014. Page 5.

¹⁹⁵ Source: 'Leave no-one behind' Report for Deafblind Cymru. October 2013. Pages 14-15.

Beneficiaries were monitored during the course of 2013¹⁹⁶, and asked at three points in the year to answer questions about their well-being and opportunities to socialise. From baseline to 12 months later, 32% of beneficiaries felt they had seen positive changes in their ability to access leisure opportunities in their local community. 24% felt they had also seen positive changes in their ability to leave their home and go into their community¹⁹⁷.

Other positive benefits identified were the personal development and achievements of beneficiaries and increased visibility, autonomy, and independence.

Cadwyn Môn: Age Cymru Gwynedd a Môn

Source/Methodology:

End of Year 2 Report to BIG.

- 79% of beneficiaries supported state that they have made new friends and that their social networks have improved.
 - 76% of beneficiaries supported state that they feel more confident¹⁹⁸
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Rural Friendships: PAVO

Source/Methodology:

Four case studies, report detailing outcomes over project lifetime, spreadsheet with basic project data.

External End of Year Three Evaluation Report (January 2014), with findings based on client referral forms, volunteer application forms, Older Persons Outcome Star Assessments, satisfaction survey results, befriending agreements, focus groups, case studies and telephone interviews (numbers not specified).

- As of January 2014, 39 beneficiaries had completed both baseline and final Older Person Star Assessments. 87% (34) reported an increase in feelings of independence. 76% (30) of beneficiaries reported an increase in feelings of well-being¹⁹⁹.
 - Feedback was provided by only one volunteer. They stated they were surprised at how being a volunteer had benefited them, but didn't go into further detail.
 - Two of the case studies provided gave qualitative detail on the difference befriending made, with one beneficiary stating they wouldn't have been able to manage without the service.
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Welcome Friends: CVS

Source/Methodology:

Year 1, 2 and 3 Evaluation Reports²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Base unknown

¹⁹⁷ Source: External Evaluation of In Touch Wales Befriending Project. B. Peckford. (Feb 2015). Page 24

¹⁹⁸ Source: End of Year 2 report to BIG. Page 10. Base for percentages provided unknown.

¹⁹⁹ Source: The Powys Befriending Project End of Year Three Final Report. Institute of Rural Health. January 2014. Pages 27 - 29

²⁰⁰ The Beth Johnson Foundation was commissioned as the project's external evaluators.

The project has adopted CASP 19 – a measure of quality of life in old age which used 19 Likert Scale items and deployed this with a sample of 169 newly engaged beneficiaries in year three of the project. Follow-up questionnaires will be deployed in Year Five of the project.

Direct quotations from beneficiaries were included in the reports to illustrate how the project had benefited them personally. Benefits identified included;

- Increased confidence
- Increased socialisation
- New skills (especially digital skills) and sense of achievement
- Increased independence
- Increase in positive feelings
- Feelings of belonging – ‘I feel content now that I am a part of something’
- Feelings of self-worth – ‘makes me feel worthwhile’²⁰¹

In the year three report there was also evidence of beneficiaries now meeting regularly outside the context of the project²⁰².

There was limited qualitative feedback available from volunteers, which indicated they had gained a sense of satisfaction as a result of their involvement with the project²⁰³

Neighbourliness II. Age Connects Neath Port Talbot.

Source/Methodology:

Project Data report (February 2014) and accompanying e-mail (received 3rd October 2014)
Emergent Themes and Views Initial Report. February 2013.

Key findings from a beneficiary perspective;

- At the point the data used in the data report was gathered (October 2013) beneficiaries surveyed at the end of their intervention had already seen some changes as a result of the project. The biggest change was that beneficiaries felt lonely less often than they used to (average change +0.6). Significant positive changes had also been made to beneficiaries’ confidence in meeting new people (+0.4), being able to maintain a sense of independence (+0.4) and having opportunities to socialise and mix with others (+0.5). However, beneficiaries also felt less able to make choices about what they do (-0.3)²⁰⁴
 - Qualitative feedback from 40 beneficiaries was collected at a social event in December 2012. Several people commented on the difference the project had made to them in terms of both increased confidence and socialisation, saying ‘I’m much more like my old self after coming here’ and pointing to another lady who had ‘come out of her shell’²⁰⁵.
 - At the time the qualitative feedback was undertaken in 2013 and 2014, several of the social groups established as part of the project were due to end. However, beneficiaries were aiming to keep up their friendship – ‘I’m not sure if we’ll meet the others in the group now that the project is coming to an end but we will keep in touch
-

²⁰¹ Source: Welcome Friends Second Annual Report. 2013. Pages 5 to 6.

²⁰² Source: Welcome Friends Third Annual Report. Beth Johnson Foundation. Page 4.

²⁰³ Ibid., Page 7

²⁰⁴ Source: Promoting Independence Through Neighbourliness. February 2014. Page 4.

²⁰⁵ Source; Emergent Themes and Views Initial Report. February 2013. Pages 2 – 3.

by phone – but making physical contact is really important'. The latter would be made very difficult by a lack of funding for transport for beneficiaries with mobility issues²⁰⁶. By March 2015, one of the social groups had become legally constituted and several had taken over responsibility for financing their activities to ensure sustainability²⁰⁷

Key findings from a volunteer perspective;

- The 15 volunteers surveyed in 2013 were asked to comment how far certain skills had increased or decreased for them as a result of the project. 71% of volunteers felt that both their personal development e.g. self-confidence, and level of participation in local activities had either 'increased greatly' or 'increased'. One volunteer felt their general health and well-being had decreased as a result of the project.²⁰⁸
 - In terms of qualitative feedback, five volunteers were talked to at a social group in December 2012. They detailed various differences the project had made to them personally, including a sense of companionship for themselves, a sense of satisfaction and making a contribution, enjoyment and personal enrichment²⁰⁹. The volunteers were also able to comment on the difference made to the beneficiaries, saying 'people seem really happy after they've been on the programme for a while and it's really good to see the progress they've made'²¹⁰.
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²⁰⁶ Ibid., Page 3.

²⁰⁷ Source: Document detailing project progress, March 2015. Page 4.

²⁰⁸ Source: Emergent Themes and Views Initial Report. February 2013. Page 4.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., Page 4.

²¹⁰ Ibid., Page 4.